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LECTURES AND SERMONS.

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LECTURES AND SERMONS,

BY THE LATE

JAMES M'LAGAN, D.D.

FREE CHURCH PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, ABERDEEN.

WITH A

PREFACE,

BY

THE REV. A. D. DAVIDSON,

ABERDEEN.

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1853.



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## PREFACE.

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A DESIRE having been expressed, not only in private, by many of the friends of the late Dr. M'LAGAN, but also publicly by those whose opinion is deservedly of great weight, that some of the fruits of his studies should be given to the world,—the present Volume has been prepared in compliance with that desire. It had also been suggested by friends that a brief Memoir accompanying the volume might prove acceptable, and not unprofitable; and could sufficient materials have been collected for this purpose, the suggestion would have been carried into effect. But although Dr. M'Lagan was well known to many of the most distinguished Ministers of the Church, and though his high abilities and acquirements, as well as his virtues, were honoured by all who enjoyed the privilege of his friendship, he lived from first to last in such retirement,—he was so unobtrusive,—he thought so humbly of himself, and took so little part, at least prominently, in Church Courts or elsewhere, in debating the great questions that have been agitated so keenly of late years,—that little could be said to interest general readers in a sketch of his quiet and unpretending history. He was a man of God,—deeply experienced as a Christian,—exhibiting in rich maturity the varied graces that adorn the Christian character, and ever ready at the call of his Master to give himself to his Master's work; but even his public labours were performed with so little about them to attract attention, or we should rather say, were so completely

illustrative of the retiring spirit of the man, that an attempt to give a detailed account of them would certainly do injustice to his memory. He was, to our own knowledge, much more abundant in works of faith and labour of love than many who could claim his acquaintance were aware of; and with the feeling that there might be others knowing him better and more intimately than we did, we would not venture to incur the responsibility of leading any to suppose that the facts and incidents which we might be able to record formed even a meagre sketch of the life of such a man.

As the Minister successively of two rural parishes, his most vigorous years were spent in the faithful discharge of all the functions of his sacred calling, and in laying deep the foundations of that theological knowledge for which he was so distinguished. On several occasions proposals were made to him to accept of other charges; but he continued to minister at Kinfauns, in the neighbourhood of Perth, until, in compliance with the call of the Church, he consented to remove to Aberdeen in 1845, to preside over the Divinity College there. While holding that office, he gave himself to his work with his usual quiet and calm assiduity, securing equally the affection and the reverence of his Students. But after struggling against infirm health for two successive years,—though with scarcely any interruption to his public duties,—he was removed to his rest in October, 1852, full of the faith and hope of the Gospel.

But while we have felt ourselves prevented, for the reasons above stated, from attempting to give even a brief account of the life of Dr. M'Lagan, it is necessary that we make some allusion to his labours as Professor of Divinity. Without this we could not well submit to the public the selection from his Lectures which is now given. His

method of teaching was different from that which is followed by most Professors. It consisted more in the use of text-books than in prelection. The greater part of that which may be called *technical* in the science, he inculcated from the text-book,—going far more minutely into the evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion, as well as into the details and proofs of all the leading doctrines of the Bible, than any one would suppose who should merely read his Lectures, even had they all been published. In his view of the benefit and importance of this mode of teaching he coincided entirely with Dr. Chalmers; but he went farther than his great contemporary, believing, as he was often accustomed to say, that by the use of the text-book, conjoined with frequent and close examination of the Students, he could ascertain much more satisfactorily whether he had put them in possession of the whole truth than it would have been possible for him to do by any other method. His Lectures were thus only occasionally introduced,—sometimes to clear the way for the investigation of a question that was to be examined, and more frequently to form a kind of summary of what had been ascertained by previous and minute inquiry. Had his life been prolonged, the Lectures would undoubtedly have embraced a wider range, although we believe that he would have still adhered to his original design of making the text-book the chief instrument of conveying instruction to his Students.

The Lectures contained in this volume are by no means the whole that might have been published. He left behind him a finished series upon the *Canon* of Scripture, and another upon the all-important question of the *Inspiration* of Scripture. But as in the discussion of both these subjects, he was unavoidably led to refer often to the writings of others,—these especially modern;—and as his views on Inspiration were substantially the same as those of Gaussen's, it was



not deemed advisable to commit them to the press. They served the purpose admirably of furnishing the Students with a luminous and comprehensive knowledge of all that has been written upon these questions; but we have not made them part of the present volume, because, from the necessity of the case, they were more a compilation of the opinions of others than a statement of his own.

But we must now take the liberty to advert, with somewhat more minuteness than might be expected in a preface, to the work which is here submitted to the public. Various classes of readers will form different estimates of it: but our object will be gained if, in any respect, it shall contribute to do honour to the memory of the Deceased. We believe it will. These Lectures are very different from anything of the kind which we have yet had opportunity to read on similar subjects. We question very much,—and that without any disrespect whatever to any now living,—whether the great truths of Christian Theology, so far as they are here handled, were ever so presented before to the minds of Students. In all probability, one cause of the peculiarity is to be attributed to the circumstance already referred to, that Dr. McLagan taught more from the text-book than by lecture. But certainly, in the very work of preparing these Lectures for the press,—a mere mechanical employment,—we could not help envying the Students who heard them, and who enjoyed the privilege of having their minds trained by such means and by such a Lecturer by almost daily examination. A man may write much,—and much very usefully too,—upon the various subjects which are discussed in this volume, before he comes to see what the venerable author seems ever to have seen and kept before his mind,—that, in every respect, JESUS CHRIST is the revelation of God. Perhaps more strikingly than in any other instance, the Lecture on SAVING FAITH will be found to justify

this observation. But it is unnecessary to be special,—the whole volume is a demonstration of the truth that Christ is the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

If we mistake not, the view which is taken of the Covenant of Works in its *protective* character, will be read with interest by Theologians, as well as the brief but most comprehensive account which is given of the Moral Law. With regard to the Lectures upon the Work of the Spirit, which occupy so prominent a place, it will be seen that though at first sight some of them might have been classified as belonging to another department, yet the whole series is so linked together, that no part could have been left out or arranged differently, without manifest disadvantage. Altogether, although we may be accused of presumption for making such a statement, we believe that it will not be easy, within the compass of modern theology, to find a volume, where some of the most precious truths of Divine revelation are so luminously exhibited, and so powerfully illustrated and enforced, as they are here : and we trust it will not be imagined from the title of the work, that it is altogether beyond the comprehension of ordinary readers. There is depth enough to exercise the minds of the most learned and vigorous thinkers ; but there is clearness at the same time, so that every one who loves and reverences the Bible, although not much familiarized to polemical discussion, will obtain nutriment here for his soul. The truth is, that the cast of Dr. Mc'Lagan's mind was such, that even almost all the Sermons which he wrote,—of which we have given a specimen at the end of the volume,—might have formed Lectures in Theology. He was never satisfied with looking merely at the surface of a subject : he rather sought after the pith and marrow of what he undertook to handle. And to this circumstance is to be attributed the fact that, while his preaching was

highly relished by those who could give full, and close, and continuous attention to the speaker, it was not calculated to be popular in the usual sense of that term. His mind was more moulded after the stamp of Jonathan Edwards, John Foster, and such men, than of those who, by a ready eloquence and a happy power of illustration, can attract and rivet the attention of a common audience. If we were asked, indeed, to say what writer Dr. M'Lagan chiefly resembled, we should select Foster as the one whom he most closely approaches. The work of composition was not in itself a pleasure to either of them : it was rather an exercise. They were not contented with superficial views ; they were not easily satisfied with what they wrote as an expression of their views ; they saw much more in the Bible than meets the eye of an ordinary reader or expounder ; and they elaborated their ideas with such care, in order to bring out into the light what they saw and felt, that you hardly know whether to regret that they should have written so little, or to rejoice that they should have been at pains to write so well.

At this point we might bring our Preface to a close. But there is one observation which we cannot forbear to offer, namely this,—that if there was anything by which, in his whole mode of thinking and feeling, as well as in all he said and did, Dr. M'Lagan was peculiarly characterised, it was his *reverence* for the Word of God. To him the mind of the Spirit, plainly revealed in the Scripture, was the all-sufficient authority. This will appear sufficiently from the Lectures and Sermons which are here printed. His acquirements as a scholar were very varied and extensive, as those who knew him intimately all acknowledged ; but he was no lover of minute criticism, and he ever made his scholarship subservient to the maintaining of the sacredness of Holy Writ, according to the general analogy of faith.

He was not a reckless expounder of the Divine Oracles, setting up a particular view of one text at the expense of the bearing and tenor of the whole, and preferring a striking exposition of one passage without regard to the plain sense of other passages: but he dealt with the whole as a whole, with reference to the great central truth of God's expedient for the salvation of sinners, through the mission, incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For this reason his teaching was fitted to impress, and did impress, the minds of his Students with a kind of sacred awe, and made them feel that their object as Ministers of the Gospel must not be to seek to gain admiration for their own learning, but to bring sinners to bow before the authority of the Word of God, and to submit to the Saviour whom God hath sent.

We have only to add, in conclusion, that in preparing this volume for the press we have not ventured to change what the Author had written except under the two following limitations. In the first place, we did not think it necessary to introduce every quotation from the original Scriptures which we found in the Lectures, with the accompanying comments; because common readers could not have appreciated such a thing, and scholars might have been disappointed, in as much as the critical remarks were only given at length when the Lectures were delivered, and could not therefore have afforded satisfaction except to those who heard them. And perhaps it had been as well that we had pursued from the beginning the plan which was only adopted when the work was in progress, of omitting almost wholly the references to the terms of the original. In the second place, when, as it very often happened, a choice was left to us among several terms in the M.S.,—which should be deleted and which preserved,—we took that which appeared to us the best, although we may not always have selected as the Writer himself would have done. But we ventured



not to make additions of our own farther than to mark sometimes as emphatic what we felt the voice of the Writer, had we been listening to him, would have made so.

With these few remarks, we submit the Volume to the Public, confident of this, that no one will proceed far in reading it without having the conviction wrought in him that he is brought into contact not only with a rich and powerful mind, but with a mind enlightened and sanctified by the Spirit of Truth, and, at the same time, humble and unassuming as infancy itself.

ALEXANDER D. DAVIDSON.

ABERDEEN, 3d January, 1853.

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# INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

NOVEMBER, 1848.

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ON occasion of opening the Hall last Session, we were led to consider the difference betwixt the ministry of the Gospel and any of the ordinary professions, with reference especially to the *motives* by which we may lawfully be actuated in the choice of the one or of the other. The proper and immediate objects of the sacred office stand so widely apart from those of all the rest, that the class of feelings under the influence of which we embrace it, ought also to be in a great measure distinct. The salvation of men and the glory of God, are no doubt ends to be ultimately contemplated by all, whatever their earthly pursuit may be; but it is in his capacity of Christian, and not of lawyer or physician, that a member of either of these faculties is bound to pursue the *spiritual* aim; his professional concern is with the health or wealth, the worldly comfort and prosperity of his fellows. He, therefore, brings no special reproach upon himself, he lays no discredit or disqualification upon his function, if making religion a separate question, he betake himself to his profession simply as a source of income, or a path of preferment. But with an ambassador of Christ, the case is wholly different. To secure the *spiritual* end is the express design of his mission. If a livelihood accrues, he has it merely as a human being that cannot live without subsistence or work without means. But

as a minister, his heart must be set upon turning souls to his Master. Proclaiming the grace of Christ because he loves him, and longing for the redemption of many that he may share with them the crown of immortality, he must bring his whole soul into the occupations of a spiritual stewardship, and must persevere in them with ever reviving ardour and energy, from the feeling that these employments, if any on earth, are in their own nature most honourable and most delightful, and in their results most blessed, alike to himself and to others. Here it is that he must seek to be rich—rich in the treasures of a godly and a gracious heart. Thus must he—loving, honour God the Saviour, even by demonstrating the power of his Gospel to give holiness and peace to sinful men. But if forgetting those exalted objects, he chooses the *sacred office* with an eye to the *secular gain*, then he constitutes himself an hireling—turns an earnest calling into a life either of shameful ease, or of drudging hypocrisy—becomes wholly disqualified to promote even incidentally the proper ends of his profession, and on the contrary causes many of those to stumble and fall and perish, whom it was his commission to save. For of the ministers of the Gospel more than of all other men, and with a special regard as much to the state of their hearts as to the tenor of their conduct, is that solemn saying true, “He that is not for me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.”

Considerations like these seem peculiarly appropriate to your present circumstances. Your entrance here is proof of your strong inclination to the pastoral office. The time, however, is not yet arrived when your final resolution must be taken—the object of your studies meanwhile is nothing else than to fit yourselves for serving the good Shepherd in feeding His sheep. If all the attainments, therefore, which are necessary to success in such a service, must engage your attention as surely they must, each in the measure of its usefulness,—that of course, must

hold the first place in your aspirations, which is, beyond every other indispensable—namely, a heart to the work. If already, as I trust, the right disposition has influenced your plans and purposes, it is not the less seasonable on that account, but the more beneficial, and more hopeful rather to urge upon you the importance of cherishing and strengthening it to the uttermost. No discouragement is laid upon learning, taste, eloquence, and the like accomplishments, by placing far before them, in the scale of ministerial qualification, a spirit of apostolic zeal, fidelity, and devotedness, itself the fruit of sound doctrinal knowledge and of faith and love unfeigned. On the contrary, where this is paramount, every art and acquirement that gives access to the treasures of scripture or power over the hearts of men, being an instrument conducive to the triumphs of a fervent evangelism, will be cultivated with a conscientious and sacred industry, which becomes incalculably the more successful, because it heightens literary pleasure into religious delight. Whereas if this spirit be neglected, or retire from the supremacy that belongs to it, into a subordinate rank among the motives to ministerial diligence—then, although it should escape the antagonism of sloth, sensuality, or covetousness, and should incur no grosser rivalry than may arise from the fascination of mere study, or from the intellectual and sentimental luxuries of learning, and learned distinction, yet there is imminent danger lest even the refined appetite that feeds on these things, if suffered to usurp the place of the higher principle, should prove in its effects upon the style and efficiency of our ministerial career, only somewhat less unsightly and revolting, but not at all less deadly than the other forms, let them be the basest in which worldliness is wont to pollute and profane the sanctuary of God.

But the “higher principle,” it will be thought, lies beyond the reach of mere human purchase or acquirement. Knowledge, powers of speech, and habits of labour, with a fixed purpose how

to employ them, are things which, with ordinary capacities, a determined man may compass; but the holy ardour of Paul or Luther, of Knox or Chalmers, is a gift of God's free and sovereign Spirit:—by what exertion or skill can that be attained? To this all-important question we must address ourselves presently; but it is better, first, to fix our attention upon the fact that the preparation of heart referred to, the true secret of all pastoral faithfulness and success, is in very deed the work of the Holy Ghost only. It is evidently a frame and temperament of the mind that cannot exist but in a regenerate man. In the soil of a believing heart, the higher pastoral virtues will grow but nowhere else. He only who has experienced in himself the horrors of guilt and the dread of judgment, can look with fit pity and concern on the misery of others hastening unconsciously to eternal darkness. He only who has, himself, fled for his life to the cross, and found forgiveness and rest in the Lord Jesus Christ, can cry to others with due confidence and due earnestness to seek the same refuge. None can proclaim with true fervour the love of God and the blessedness of loving Him, but the man whom he daily admits to the comfort of his paternal fellowship, and whom the love of Christ constraineth, himself to live no longer to himself, but unto Him that died for him and rose again. That man alone in describing the coming rewards of righteousness, can give them distinctness, substance, and richness, to move the hearts of others, who has realised to his own hope the glorious inheritance of God's children, is daily anticipating its happiness, and joyfully feels in his soul the truth of every word which he is uttering in its praise. That man in short whom God hath filled with his own fulness, is the **ONLY** man, who can either proffer that fulness with becoming largeness of affection to other men, or labour and pray with a longing and agonizing desire that others may be filled with it. But until this is done, the work of the ministry is not done. Until these means are employed, the ade-



quate, the appointed means of saving men's souls are not employed. Where such a man is not found, the veritable messenger of Christ is not found. And who can turn an earthly creature into such an agent of heaven as this, save God's omnipotent Spirit? Without him, or with only his common influences, there may be a semblance of the labour, and a shadow of the labourer; but there only will the living and effectual realities appear, where the Holy Ghost has rested upon one like Paul or Jeremiah separated from the womb, and after first creating him anew unto good works at large, has next furnished and adorned him specially for this peculiar task, and girded him throughout with persevering energy, "to watch in all things, to endure afflictions, to do the work of an evangelist, to make full proof of his ministry."

Now in a world where so many myriads are going astray because there is no shepherd to gather them, and perishing for lack of knowledge, because there is no guide to instruct them, what you desire, without question, is to go forth as *genuine* ministers, and do the *effectual* work. Animated in measure with the life and spirit of the Great Prophet himself, each of you would follow after Him, as a true evangelist preaching the whole doctrine of grace and righteousness with fervent exhortation and continual prayer, that so, in this brief interval of our days, you may save both yourselves and them that hear you. Not one of us surely would be willing to put on the show—to wear the appearance, and omit the substance—to flit across the scene a priestly phantom, filling, it may be, the senses of men, but famishing their souls. The Lord forbid it us! But if we dread and loathe that wretched and most criminal pageantry, it is indispensable to cease from all vain, all delusive confidences, and rest wholly in that sufficiency which God has provided. The gifts of nature and the fruits of study, may of themselves enable us to furnish entertainment very acceptable to unawakened minds, but not to satisfy the spiritual appetite of men that hunger and thirst

after righteousness, still less to create that appetite where it does not exist:—just as an automaton skilfully constructed, may be made by mere mechanism to fill the ear with exquisite music, but never to hold converse with the rational soul. Nay, there is deficiency in a higher respect, to which the creations, not of man's hands, but of Divine power, will supply the apter parallel. One wonderful element of nature, it is well known, when applied, under certain conditions and modifications, to the dead body of a man, can give action to the limbs and expression to the features, exhibiting symptoms that by an uninformed spectator, would at once be received as unquestionably the movements of life:—and yet the exciting agent, how conducive soever to vital warmth and vigour, where life exists, will not long preserve the CORPSE from natural decay; still less restore its lost animation, or send it forth anew to perform the functions and enjoy the fellowships of a man among living men. Even so, there are unseen powers far surpassing those of nature in the human soul, mysterious influences of the Divine Spirit, for wise purposes imparted, in all their tendencies good and holy, yet not sent forth in that fulness of power which subdues the stoutest hearted sinner to obedience,—influences that give many an appearance of life to the spiritually dead; and in the case of ministers particularly, often prompt good resolutions, and excite occasional fervours, and stir up to professional exertions, such as both by a man himself and by his flock, are easily mistaken for the acts of a spiritual life indeed; until the deadening contact of the world has sunk him perhaps into inaction, or some over-mastering lust has driven him into sin; when all, even the ungodly, are made sensible at last, that the seeming pastor, once perhaps so promising, was but a stimulated carcase—not a living man of God. O! who would not fear, by running such a course, to arrive at such an end? But if we would shun it, then let this truth be deeply engraven on our conscience, that to qualify us for the Christian ministry,

nothing will suffice,—not talents—not labour,—not even the fruits of the Holy Spirit, *short of* thorough conversion and abiding holiness. That foundation laid, to him still must we look that, through Christ, and in the earnest and studious employment of all proper means (for what industry and labour are not here requisite,) “we may in every thing be enriched by him, in all utterance and in all knowledge, so that we may come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The agency of divine power being thus indispensable to the sufficiency of Christ’s servants, it next becomes a question of surpassing interest—Is there sure provision made for the supply of such grace? Is there a way ordained, by which all who really seek shall infallibly obtain it? Paul knew the solemn urgency, which these enquiries would assume in the minds of many when he said, “We receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.” Heb. xii. 28. 29. The words are subjoined immediately after a contrast instituted by the apostle, betwixt the terrible majesty and rigour of the Old dispensation and the gracious condescensions and privileges of the New. It is true, his object is to make christians feel the vast increase of their responsibilities:—“For if they escaped not ‘says he,’ who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him who spake from heaven.” But the very reason, as he intimates, why more shall be required of them is just that so greatly more has been given them. Accordingly, while the law as to its letter is elsewhere called by him “the ministration of death,” the gospel is expressly declared to be “the ministration of the Spirit;” and in explanation of this latter statement he informs us, that as on the one side Christ is himself the spirit even of the old dispensation, and the all in all of the new; so, on the other side, the Spirit of Christ, unquestionably the Holy Spirit, is

he “by whom, being enabled to behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory.” Indeed if there is difficulty in this remarkable passage, it seems to arise from the fact, that in the apostle’s view the advent of Christ has so brought the whole fulness of the Holy Spirit into his kingdom, and the Holy Spirit thus bestowed, does so richly apply to the subjects of that kingdom the whole blessings of Christ’s advent, that to speak of either event or action is to suggest both:—and though for distinctness sake he separately names the two Divine persons, yet he does it with a blending cast of expression that seems reluctant to let the unity of their operation go. Bringing this remark to bear upon the exhortation just referred to, “we have a kingdom, therefore let us have grace,” how animating does the MOTIVE appear, when we reflect, that Christ is our king, and grace is just the working of Christ’s own Spirit. Receiving this kingdom from the Father, we receive Him through the shedding of whose blood it became justly possible to forgive all our sins, to regenerate our corrupt souls, and receive us back into the bosom of heavenly love:—And along with the Saviour, or rather in the Saviour, we simultaneously receive Him, whose power strengthens us with all might in the inner man, that we may behold the glory of Christ, that he may dwell in our hearts by faith, that we may be rooted and grounded in his love, that we may become wise in his wisdom, faithful and strenuous in his work, and so may enter at last into his joy. Placed within this kingdom, if we will take hold of its privileges, what spiritual gift will He deny who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all? Coming to the Lord Jesus, what saving mercy will He withhold who bore his Father’s anger for our redemption? Committing ourselves to the influences of the Comforter, what precious benefits will He not impart, whose glory it is to work out in their divinest perfection and beauty the gracious counsels of the Father and the Son,—which are equally his own? In this age and region

of the gospel we are compassed about on every side with the blessings of salvation. It is but stretching out our arms and we embrace them. It is but opening our hearts and we enjoy them. Yes, receiving such a kingdom, let us have grace.

These considerations, while available to all hearers of the Gospel, will not on that account seem now inappropriate, if it is still remembered that the primary qualification of a Christian minister is to be a Christian. But the ground of encouragement laid down by the apostle, is spacious enough to sustain the professional expectations of every aspirant to the sacred office, let his desires be ever so enlarged. Indeed, there is in the terms a special aptitude to meet his case, as far exceeding their ordinary application, as the responsibilities of his calling exceed those of Christians in general. If Christ is a king, these, in their humble distance from *His* greatness, are the public officers of His kingdom, the heralds of His law, the agents of His authority, the soldiers of His host. He has himself ordained and limited their functions. He has selected the individuals, and assigned to each his station and his work. Over some portion of His subjects He has given to each a charge as over His own family, His beloved children; commanding him to watch, because at any moment he may be called to give account of his stewardship. "Who is a faithful and wise servant—" thus He has enjoined him—"whom his Lord hath made ruler over His household, to give them meat in due season. Blessed is that servant, whom His Lord when He cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that He will make him ruler over all His goods. But, and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite His fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there



shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Has the merciful Lord imposed upon a sinful worm, duties of a nature so elevated—that make him liable to so solemn a reckoning, and as he is found to have discharged or violated them, exalt his soul to heavenly glory, or plunge it into eternal darkness; and shall we think, that having all spiritual aids at His disposal, He will not, when importuned, bestow them specially upon that man, who more than all other men has need of them, and in whose hands, from the nature of his labours, they will most abound to the glory of the Giver? No! When He ascended up on high leading captivity captive, and was enthroned in His kingdom; as He received the several orders of His ministers to be gifts for the rest of men, so did he receive for His ministers the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit; and impart them in the measure of each, not only to apostles, prophets, and inspired evangelists, but also to ordinary pastors and teachers, that they too from age to age, might be fitly endowed for the “perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; until we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Thus, beyond the ample treasures of spiritual aid bestowed upon the Church at large, there is special and peculiar provision made for Christ’s especial servants; so that though their task be arduous, their temptations many, and their strength, to human eyes, as nothing, yet the grace of Christ is found sufficient for them, his strength is made perfect in weakness. Did He to whom the word of promise was addressed, in these very terms, to whom, lest he should be exalted above measure by the greatness of his privileges, there was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him,—did Paul the apostle, after beseeching the Lord thrice that the temptation might depart from him, and being refused, count his Master’s aid insufficient, because his own

helplessness was great? Quite the contrary! Most gladly cries he, "will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I will take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak then am I strong; for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing!" Well did this man appreciate the force, and carry out the spirit of his own exhortation, "receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God with reverence and godly fear."

The spiritual endowments, however, of Paul and his colleagues in the apostleship, men destined to such unexampled labours and achievements, were altogether extraordinary. Can we reason from their case to our own? The grace surely that was abundantly adequate to meet their necessities, must suffice to overflowing for ours. Thus far, at least, we may conclude confidently. But have we the same means of obtaining the aids of God's Spirit, which they employed so prosperously? *How* did Paul acquire his marvellous graces? The answer is easy and simple—Paul prayed. On the way to Damascus, his very first utterance after recovering from the speechless terror of his vision, and learning who it was that spake to him from Heaven, was a prayer for instruction—"Lord! what wouldst thou have me to do?" When the Lord Jesus commissioned to him the messenger, through whose ministry he was to receive sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost; the reason assigned for such great favour was—"behold he prayeth." At Jerusalem, it was when he was praying in the Temple that he fell into a trance, and saw the Lord, who gave him his distinctive charge, not without all the gifts necessary to fulfil it, saying unto him, "Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." It was when he prayed at Philippi, together with Silas in the prison, that not only were his fetters loosed, but it was given

him, by the cry of a moment, and by the testimony of a single sentence, both to preserve the jailor's earthly life, and to save his soul, and the souls of his household. And what need of many instances? His epistles throughout bear witness that the breath of his spiritual being, the spring of his apostolic energy and power, was constant, fervent, believing prayer—prayer in his solitude, prayer with his fellow-workmen, prayer in all the congregations of the saints. And as by this, he was enabled to consecrate the prime of his years and strength to God, in services as zealous as they were effectual; so also when the shades of evening gathered round the head of Paul the aged, and the power of the persecutor began to threaten against him significantly, what not many months thereafter, it put in execution, his bloody martyrdom,—by this he assured himself, as accordingly it came to pass, that the close of his christian warfare would ratify and crown all its previous achievements. “For I know,” says he, (Phil. i. 19), referring to the cruelty of false brethren at Rome, who not content with his imprisonment, sought to add affliction if not death to his bonds, “I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; according to my earnest expectation, and my hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.” In a word, the apostle took hold upon the promise of his King, “all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matt. xxi. 22.) “Again, I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is Heaven: FOR where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt. xviii. 19.) Paul understood, and held it for a fact, that of the kingdom of Heaven it was a standing law and constitution, that through the believing prayer of one

or many, all needful gifts should always and without exception be derived from the King to his subjects, more especially to His immediate servants; and therefore he, receiving a kingdom that could not be moved, took effectual heed, that by prayer singly, and prayer in fellowship, he should have grace, whereby to serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.

Well! Is this a law for inspired men only, like Paul, Apollos, Timothy; or is it for all gospel ministers, or aspirants to the ministry, or in truth for all christian men? For all Christians it is undoubtedly; but in particular for all Ministers whether in the actual service of the sanctuary, or under training. For though there were even ground for us to think that the promise, "ask and ye shall receive," was addressed only to the apostles, which is not the case, yet the subjoined explanation and enforcement of the promise, "*for every one that asketh receiveth,*" takes off the limitation entirely. If Paul then had an interest in this constitution, so have we. If his believing prayers were answered, so will ours. If holding by the royal word and the chartered privilege, he laid claim, now with solitary tears, and now with collective supplication to the mighty and marvellous aids which his conflict needed, and was never once denied them—so we too, toiling unregarded in our halls and closets, as we must now do, or sent forth upon the christian warfare, as if not already, we may be hereafter, to fight not alone against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places, against the rulers of the darkness of this world—shall assuredly receive of our King, if we ask them severally, if we ask them unitedly, if we ask them believing, every pastoral gift, and every gracious influence, that can conduce to the efficacy of our ministry in this present condition of the church and of the world. Let us not say—and yet why should we not?—that God in the dispensation of his Spirit is sovereign—that in the case of Saul of Tarsus, he had mercy on whom he would have mercy, and

that among us, he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion. True it is, we know not on whom, in the counsel of his eternal purpose, he will bestow saving benefits, and from whom he will restrain them. But just because we do not know it, and cannot, that is no question for us to entertain. Secret things belong unto the Lord; and in the issue of his dispensation, He will be justified when he speaketh, and clear when he is judged. But the things which are revealed pertain to us and to our children—and if, on the one hand, it is revealed, that when the saving graces and pastoral gifts of the Holy Spirit are lavished on any, “it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy,” let this humble us deeply; let this prostrate all our pride in the dust. O sinful sons of Adam! undone by our father’s iniquity and our own! let us acknowledge with trembling that all the works of God are just and his ways judgment; let us give praise, that despite our evil deservings there is yet hope. That hope let us flee to, seeing, on the other hand, it is a thing revealed, that believing prayer is never void, but that understanding the Divine promises in their true application to our state, if we have faith in them as a grain of mustard seed, we shall say to this mountain remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto us;—seeing this is revealed, let us rest and act upon it as a Divine certainty. Let us cry with daily earnestness to the Lord, not doubting but he will answer us, that he may blot out our sins, that he may sanctify our hearts—that he may clothe us with all pastoral graces and powers—that he may send us forth to his work, in a backsliding age, and under the frown of coming judgments, to give our lives freely to the glory of his name and to the salvation of his chosen people. He will not deny our petitions. He is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think. Our labour shall be prosperous, our reward though unseen shall be sure. Only let our requests be fervent,

let our trust in the Lord be entire. In secret let our prayer be constant. Twice or thrice a day, as opportunity is given, let our joint supplications be offered up within these walls. Let us give thanks to God that since our last assembling here, our circumstances, by His good hand upon us are so greatly improved, that so many men of God, well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, and devoted to its interests, have consented to assist our studies by their matured intelligence, and bring their exercised faith and fervour into the concert of our prayers. Surely this is a token for good. It may stir up many more to wrestle for us in the sanctuary, that so indeed, receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, we may have abundant grace, whereby to serve God with reverence and godly fear; for our God is ■ consuming fire.



## LECTURE II.

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### PERSONALITY, DIVINITY, AND PROCESSION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

WE are now to proceed to the consideration of the essential and momentous part which the Holy Spirit bears in the work of our salvation. But in so doing, we cannot omit what forms the adequate and appropriate introduction to that subject, namely, some brief account of what the Scripture teaches regarding the Personality, the Divinity, the Procession, and the Mission of the Spirit. At present, we can overtake only the first three of these particulars.

And, *first*, as to his Personality, nothing can be plainer from the manner in which the scriptures speak of him throughout, than that the Holy Spirit is a Person. By this it is not meant that just as the one true God, without present reference made to a Trinity in his nature, may be spoken of as a person—"God is a spirit"—so the Holy Ghost has a share in that general personality; but that along with the Father and the Son he has the nature and relations of a Person in that Trinity itself—is in truth the Third Person therein, as the Father and Son are the other two. Such personality it is plain excludes also the idea of the Holy Ghost being merely an energy, an influence, an operation of any or all of the divine attributes; for it is very intelligible as a contradicting proposition to say, "The Holy Spirit of God is not an influence, but a Person."

The truth of this statement then is established by passages of Scripture much too numerous to be now adduced. Let us attend to only a few of the most conclusive, premising, that neither they nor any other portions of the word of God were intended to reveal the mysterious nature or mode of those distinctions by which three persons are constituted in one Divine Essence. All that they teach is this—enough for us to know—that in the glorious undivided and indivisible Godhead, there do real distinctions exist, of such a kind, that when the Holy Spirit, his subsistence or his actions are made mention of in human speech, with reference to those not only of every creature, but of the Eternal Father and Son themselves, then that mention to be correct, must assume the same customary forms of language by which the personal existence and acts of any one man, are kept verbally and historically distinct from those of any two or three other men, or of all other men at large. In other words, the same terms and modes of expression are used to distinguish the peculiar subsistence of the Holy Spirit with his acts and sayings, from those of the Father and Son, as are employed to keep the person and words of Peter apart from those of James and John, or to prevent the identity and the actions of Paul from being ascribed to Barnabas or Timothy.

If there is obscurity in this general way of expressing the matter, it will speedily vanish when we come to instance, as we now do, some of the scripture passages that prove the Holy Ghost to be a Person. The first of these we may take from John xiv. 16. “I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth.” Here we find the Spirit denominated a Comforter, *παρακλητος* an advocate, and to be an advocate in any proper sense, is competent only to a person. Such is our advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ. He was also the first Comforter of the twelve Apostles; as they deeply felt when in the very dis-

course we have quoted he was addressing them, "Let not your hearts be troubled." But now at his request, the Father was to send them *another* Comforter: of these two Comforters, if the first was a person, even Jesus, was the second only a virtue, an influence? No, surely, but a Person too. With this inference, moreover, it well agrees that he was to be sent—sent by the Father—sent to the disciples. Such mission in all its parts and relations accords with his nature as a Person. When the sacred historian relates that Absalom sent Joab as his messenger to David, entreating that he might see the king's face, are the forms of speech by which the several persons are distinguished, and his own proper words and actions ascribed to each, at all more express or significant than those which serve the same purpose in this account of the mission of the Holy Ghost? They are not, and they could not be. The Son prays—the Father sends the Spirit. The Spirit is sent to the Apostles—sent as another Paraclete after the former has been withdrawn. There are many other texts in which the same significant terms of expression present themselves quite as instructively as they do in this, and several of them will come to be quoted for illustrating the subsequent portions of our subject.

In whatever tongue the statements now considered were correctly given, the force of our reasoning upon it would be the same to all who understood that tongue. But the peculiar structure of the Greek language brings to the proof of the Holy Spirit's personality a very strong grammatical argument, the only other which it seems necessary to present upon this precise point. The words *πνευμα—το ἁγίον πνευμα*, by which in the original, "Spirit," "the Holy Spirit" is designated, you all know are of the neuter gender, which is much more appropriate to things than *persons*. These latter, I mean persons, are much more usually signified by words of the masculine or feminine gender. Keeping this familiar fact in view, observe how this sentence (John

xvi. 13), "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth," is given in the original Ὅταν δὲ ἐλθῇ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς, &c. Or, again, mark the phraseology of Paul in Eph. i. 13, 14. When speaking of the Holy Ghost as the earnest of our inheritance—he says, ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ Πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ, ὃς ἐστὶν ἀρρ' ἀβῶν τῆς κληρονομίας. In these passages the junction of the masculine pronouns with the neuter noun, if it were meaningless, or not justified by the weight of meaning, would be felt as a solecism in language. But just on account of its singularity the construction which, in the one instance, brings on first the masculine ἐκεῖνος, suggestive of a person, to prevent the τὸ πνεῦμα which follows from being conceived as impersonal—and, in the other instance, the construction which to the seeming impersonality, the τὰ πνεύματι, a neuter antecedent, immediately subjoins the masculine relative ὃς τῷ πνεύματι οὗ, ἐστὶ, doing violence to grammar in order to make it apparent that the subject of his discourse is a person. This manner of speaking makes it evident by its very strangeness that Christ and his apostles were on the watch against leading any one to think the Holy Spirit was without personality, and consequently that He is a person indeed. Nor will this be made light of as a mere verbal argument by any one who considers that language under its fixed laws and usages is the only medium by which the Scriptures convey to us a sure knowledge of all the most momentous truths of our religion, and of this among the rest.

II. But, secondly, the Holy Spirit of God, being certainly a Person, is He a Divine Person? Were it our present purpose to speak of His glory at large, it would be an easy thing to show that, as in the case of Christ's divinity, so all that bespeaks the majesty of supreme Godhead is expressly ascribed to the Spirit—the names, the attributes, the works, the worship, which pertain only to the Most High, showing clearly that He is very God. And the testimonies of holy writ by which he is thus exalted,

would, most of them, be found to establish at the same time his distinct personality, as much as the words of our Lord adduced for that special purpose. But it is sufficient now, when we are merely preparing the way for speaking of His office in the Covenant of Grace, to present one clear argument, conclusive as to His possession of true and absolute Deity, co-equal with that of the Father and the Son. It turns upon the ascription to Him by St. Paul of one of the incommunicable attributes of Jehovah, the attribute of infinite knowledge; which, if He does indeed possess, it follows that He is of the Essence, and therefore clothed with all the perfections of the one eternal, unlimited, and immutable Lord God. Read with me the words of the Apostle. They are found in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, ii. 9-12. "It is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? *even so* the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us of God."—It cannot be necessary in offering a few observations upon these words, to begin with bringing proof that the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of whom they testify. You see at once that they can mean no other Being. Assuming this, we find two things explicitly declared of Him. First, "that he searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God"—this is the description of his own knowledge. Next, that by Him God hath revealed unto us the things unseen, unheard, unthought of before by man, which God hath prepared for them that love him. But seeing it is as the spirit of revelation to men that the apostle here introduces the mention of Him and of his knowledge, a question may arise whether the all things, yea, the

deep things of God which he searcheth, are only all the deep things of the Gospel Revelation, or whether they are the all things, the deep things absolutely, which are embraced in the knowledge of the Omniscient himself. To minds fully instructed in the height and depth and length and breadth of Gospel truth as comprehensible to us, it might have been quite a sufficient solution of the doubt, for Paul to have said, that to search all things, even the deep things of that great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory—that to *search* these things (ἐρευνᾶν) was competent to nothing less than a Divine that is an infinite understanding; and indeed he does say in another place, “it passeth knowledge.” But he has recourse rather to a more expressive method of asserting the same great fact. He teaches it by a direct comparison betwixt the Spirit’s knowledge of God, and a man’s knowledge of himself: already a conclusive statement—for what could such an illustration do but mislead, unless the Spirit were as much the one God as an individual man is that same man? But he proceeds: “What man,” he asks, “knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man that is in him?” We might answer with truth, there are many men who know the outward actions and concerns of any given man, their neighbour, to a large extent; nay, who certainly appreciate many of his inward and invisible characteristics, his intellect and his dispositions, his learning or his ignorance, his principles, purposes, feelings, in short, a great many of the particulars which, taking the phrase widely, belong to “the things of a man.” Manifestly therefore it is not such open, or, at any rate, ascertainable matters that are thought of at all in the Apostle’s challenge—“What man knoweth?” All its force lies in referring to those hidden workings of the soul which a man can conceal, and in a great measure does actually conceal from every eye but



that of God and of his own conscience. What but the spirit of a man that is within him, knoweth those deep imaginings and cogitations of the man, which are neither uttered willingly by his lips nor ever by circumstances dragged to light. Who else can search out the troubles or the delights of his bosom in those hours of lonely and self-centered emotion when the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and when a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy? This is the question of Paul; and the only answer is "no other can," "even so," then, he replies, "the things of God, knoweth no man"—*εδειξ*—no one, no being else, "but the Spirit of God" "even so"—*Ουτω και*—How far then is this comparison intended to carry us? To the Spirit's knowledge of those things only which are revealed? or only of those things which may be revealed in some glorious world hereafter? Not to these only, since an inspired teacher does surely not exaggerate, but to those mysteries also of the Divine nature and Divine understanding which shall never be made known to any creature, since of them no creature is capable; and of which not men alone but angels must exclaim—"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" All these deep—these otherwise unsearchable things of God the Spirit searcheth, if indeed, as the apostle testifies, his knowledge of God's counsel finds its true likeness in man's consciousness of his own thoughts. The result is therefore certain. The Holy Ghost, having divine knowledge, is of the Divine essence, and to him may supreme Godhead be as truly ascribed as to the Son, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen!

III. Let us now consider what is called in technical language the doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Ghost.

Having drawn from the inspired writings some conclusive proofs of his being truly and in the highest sense a *Divine Person*, we shall the less be in any danger, when viewing him as a

*derived* person, of inferring from this, however naturally the thought may suggest itself, that his nature falls short in any respect of absolute and supreme Godhead. It is a point long ago received among sober theologians, as the result of much acute and learned controversy, not unattended with many prayers and sufferings for the truth, that while God the Father is the fountain of Godhead—Πηγαία Θεότης—and while the Son and Spirit proceed from him,—yet it is by communication to them of his own absolute and eternal Deity, in all the fulness of its essence and perfections—with differences, no doubt, which impart to each a distinct personality, but not an inferiority of substance,—differences determining the numerical order of each Person in the One Godhead, as well as their mutual relations to each other internally, and the series and speciality of their several operations towards the Creatures *ad extra*—all this being as much a matter of original and immutable necessity to the nature of the One Living Lord God, as are his existence and his attributes themselves. If any of you, my young friends, coming now at once upon these conclusions, without the opportunity of previously tracing the path of scriptural investigation by which they were reached, have received some confused impression as if they were too abstruse for either certain proof or practical usefulness, perhaps you may find probable cause to think that they are however an integral portion of the Revelation of God, even in the limited reasonings to be now adduced from His word, in evidence not of the doctrine of the Trinity generally, but of that single branch of it, “the Procession of the Holy Ghost.”

There is, it must be owned, but little of formal statement in the Scriptures upon this precise point. It is distinctly taught, but taught in terms so cursory and in connections so averted from the direct inculcation of the doctrine itself, that were we to point only at *them* the truth might to some minds assume the air of something like a scholastic subtilty,—a doubtful conceit of

the theologians; whereas, by rearing a platform of admitted doctrines, or rather facts that are intimately related to this, and calling in illustrative testimonies more familiar to our thoughts, though not in themselves more certain, our understandings may possibly be lifted up to a luminous position, from which, looking forth with reverence and prayer, we shall clearly descry the authority and the importance of that standing article in the creed of all the western churches, That the Holy Spirit does proceed from the Father and the Son. By which is meant not merely his coming from them to us—that is more properly his mission, but his deriving from them, by mysterious, eternal communication, his own distinct Personality and co-essential Godhead.

1. As the first stone then in our edifice of inquiry, let us lay down the fact that the Holy Spirit is presented in Scripture as the *Third* Person of the glorious Trinity. We saw formerly that he is a Person, and that he is Divine. The single point now to be noted is, that of the Divine Persons he is numerically the Third; the Second being Christ the Son, and the First being the Eternal Father himself. One passage to the effect is all that we shall have room for, but it is the principal one, and fully sufficient for our purpose: I allude to the parting command of our Lord to his apostles, as given in the end of the Gospel by Matthew, “Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” The better to discern the force of these words, as determining the order of the Divine Persons, let us weigh a very little the import of what they enjoin—Baptism. That ordinance contemplates at once all the saving mercies of God to us, and all our obligations to him. It brings to view in one simple rite the whole counsel and work by which the Lord Jehovah prepared, and carries on, and shall complete the everlasting salvation of all the chosen seed. It makes mention distinctly of all the Three Persons of the Godhead, as well to sug-

gest the special share in this work of our salvation, which the full and clear and discriminating details of Scripture ascribe severally to each—as to require and receive for each that special homage of gratitude and trust and service on our part which is due to his peculiar glories and his personal benefits. In short, the whole theory of Christian doctrine, on the one side, and of Christian duty on the other, is involved in this one institution. It is a solemn profession that we believe the doctrine—a solemn vow that we shall observe the duty. Therefore it became the heavenly wisdom to place all things in their true position here, so that, without question, it would scarcely be more unreasonable, as most unreasonable it were, to imagine that the Son and Spirit should be joined with the Father in this high act of his fellowship and worship, unless they were God equally with Him, than it would be gratuitous and groundless to suppose that the Lord would name them, Father, Son, and Spirit, on such an occasion, in any other than the natural order of their personality, which is that also of their saving operation. Thus much for our first preliminary, the Holy Spirit's place among the persons of the Trinity.

2. In proceeding to the second, let us observe that the relative places of the Father and the Son, while plainly declared, as well as that of the Spirit in the baptismal formula, are besides sufficiently marked, at least in the relation of these persons to each other, by the very names which they bear. In the order of nature (for succession of time is out of the question where all is eternal), assuredly in the order of our conceptions (and it is to them that the Bible addresses itself), THE MERE NAME of Father suggests precedence to that of Son—precedence of order; but, at the same time, identity of nature and of substance. We cannot fail indeed to perceive that the original and primary relation of the Father to the Son as existing in the Godhead is immeasurably exalted in purity and perfection, above all among

men to which it can in condescension to the weakness of our understanding be compared. Yet in shunning perhaps to be wise above what is written, we should offend by not searching that which is written, did we not learn that in some ineffable manner, a communication of his essence by the Father to the Son, or which is the same thing, a derivation of his essence by the Son from the Father is signified in the remarkable expression so often repeated, so constantly alluded to in the Gospel, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee, (Υἱός μου εἶσθαι) ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγεννηκά σε. By creation and redemption God has many sons, but by generation only one. Christ, as John bears witness, i. 14, is the only begotten of the Father.

3. In this case then, thirdly, where there is beyond all doubt a communicated and a derived personality, let us observe, but with reverence, some of the mutual actings towards each other of the Father and the Son, arising obviously from this peculiar relation.

The Father sends the Son into the world, the Son fulfils the Father's mission. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us," says John (1st John iv. 9, 10.) "because that God *sent* his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and *sent* his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This was the Father's part, and the Son's is the perfect counterpart. (John v. 30.) "I can of mine own self do nothing. I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." (iv. 32, 34.) "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work." Again :

The Father dictates truth, the Son proclaims it, "I have not spoken of myself; (John xii. 49), but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak." (John viii. 26, 28.) "He that sent me is true,

and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him, as my Father hath taught me I speak these things."

Farther still,—the Father gives commandment, the Son performs the work. (John ix. 4.) "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." (x. 17,) "Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment *ἐντολήν* have I received of my Father."

In all the particulars of this procedure, we see a manifest congruity with our habitual notions of the paternal and filial relations. It is seemly that a Father should send, instruct, command a Son; while it were offensive if a Son should act so towards his Father; but in the fellowship of the Divine persons so related, the natural order is every where manifest, while no reversal of it is in any instance to be found. We are warranted, therefore, here in tracing the order to their relationship. With God as with men, paternity as such precedes, and sonship as such follows. And in so judging, it is not we that are chargeable with measuring Godhead by the narrow standards of poor flesh and blood; but it is God, that, in his infinite condescension, having framed our being in some true, though faint resemblance of himself, employs the faculties which he has thus formed and adjusted for the purpose, in apprehending, so far as we have need to know them, the mysteries of his own wondrous nature and harmonious working.

4. Approaching our object, however, by yet another step, let us take notice, in the fourth place, That by what acts soever we have seen the Son receive the Father's will that he might perform it, by the very same acts and to the very same end, does the Holy Spirit receive the will of both the Father and the Son. Like the Son, he is sent, and by the Father, but he is sent by the Son also. (John xiv. 16.) "I will pray the Father,



and he shall give you another Comforter." (26.) "The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom *my Father shall send* in my name, He shall teach you all things." Here is expressly the Father's mission, but that of the Son is equally unequivocal. (John xv. 26.) "When the Comforter is *come*, whom I will *send* unto you from the Father, he shall testify of me."

Like the Son again, the Spirit receives what he is to teach; and as appears distinctly from the words of one passage, receives it alike from the Father and the Son. (John xvi. 13.) "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, (my truth he evidently means) and shall shew it unto you." All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore, said I, that he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." Here then is the double though united fountain of his doctrine, the Father and the Son.

Once more: by Him the works of both the other Divine Persons are completed. For speaking of his miracles, Jesus says, (John v. 36,) "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me." Do these then cease to be the Father's own works? By no means, for he declares in another place, (xiv. 10), "The Father who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake." By whom then did the Lord Jesus himself perform his own and his Father's miracles? Judge by what he says of the most signal of them all—those, namely, by which he demonstrated his sovereign control of all the powers of darkness. (Matthew xii. 28.) "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." Could any doubt arise whether the Holy Ghost in person were spoken of here, it would at once be removed by the reflection that to the

Holy Ghost, as imparted to the disciples, all their miracles whether of power or knowledge, are throughout the New Testament scriptures ascribed. It is He then that performs the works of the Father and of the Son. Both execute their wonders by him.

5. Let us then endeavour, fifthly, to gather the result of this deduction. It may be done thus:—When we saw the Son receive his mission, doctrine, work, from the Father, we accounted for this by his derivation from the Father's Person—derivation implied in his Sonship. The Holy Ghost receiving then his mission, doctrine, work, as we see he does from the Father and the Son,—does not just analogy lead us to account for this also, by his derivation, in some similar sense, from the persons of the Father and of the Son? True, it would be presumption of the highest strain in us to intrude uncalled upon ground like this; but the Scripture leads us, and our probable inference it confirms. For what is meant by spirit? Πνευμα? In both the original languages of Scripture, as well as in that from which our word “spirit” is borrowed, the names of this Divine Person mean “a breathing;” and at the mention of them the minds of men speaking Greek or Hebrew as their native tongue, would be moved as ours would be if we heard him reverently called “The Breathing of God.” Interpreted thus, since in our language it needs interpretation, this sacred name is as expressive of derivation as that of the Son himself. And it is not to either of the other Divine Persons severally, but alike to both, and in numberless instances as to each, that it leads us as the sources of the Spirit's Personality. (Rom. viii. 11.) “If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you,” says Paul, “He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Not less expressly, however, does the same apostle speak of that Spirit in like relation to the Son (viii. 9), “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.” And again (Gal. iv. 6),

“Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father.” To confirm this, and at the same time illustrate its import by a striking symbol, was undoubtedly our Lord’s intent, when appearing in the midst of the Twelve after his resurrection, “He *breathed* on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, λαβετε Πνευμα ἁγιον.”

The reception then by the Spirit of his person and Godhead necessarily, co-equally, eternally from the Father and the Son, this is what theologians have called the Procession of the Holy Ghost, ἐκπορευσις. The term is derived from the expression of our Lord himself in John xv. 26. The Spirit of truth, saith he, which *proceedeth* from the Father—ο παρα το Πατρος εκπορευεται. It is nowhere stated with the same explicitness that he proceedeth from the Son; but enough has just been said to show that such is indeed the truth, though not recorded in the very word which the schools have selected as the *vox signata* of the subject. And it completes the evidence when we observe that such double derivation assigns to the Spirit that very place in the order of the Divine Persons which the Lord in words ascribes to him. For upon this principle if the Father is the First, and none can come between him and the Son, so He must hold a place successive to both, who proceedeth from the Second Person as well as from the First. Some reference might here be made to the controversy which of old divided, and does at this day divide, the Greek and Latin Churches, on the point whether the Spirit proceeded from the Father only, or from both the Father and Son—a controversy on which the Western Church, embracing the latter opinion, was undoubtedly right. But it concerns us more to mark that the Procession of the Spirit, however mysterious to us, differs, we are assured, essentially from the equally mysterious generation of the Son, in as much as Christ is the only begotten of the Father, and in virtue of this is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person, which is not said of

the Spirit—and imparts and sends the Spirit equally with the Father—acts like to which the Spirit himself is nowhere said to do, in reference to the other Divine Persons. Still more important is it to take heed that we do not wrest from its true Spirit the figurative language in which those awful mysteries are shadowed forth in Scripture by understanding it too literally. If, for example, the Holy Ghost be called a breathing, yet we should err extremely by pressing the comparison with human breath beyond the most guarded limits; for what manner of breathing is that which gives forth the breather's essence, without separating it from himself, and constitutes from eternity a Divine Person, infinite in knowledge, in power, and in holiness? And, finally, it behoves us above all to beware lest the mere laborious exercise of intellect necessary for searching the *δυσνοητα*, things hard to be understood, of the divine oracles; nay, lest the distinct discovering itself of matters formerly venerable from being half concealed, should diminish the solemnity and awe with which dust and ashes should contemplate God. It is using a kind of freedom with the Majesty of Heaven to investigate, to discuss, to determine the truth of those disclosures concerning his intimate nature and operations which the Scriptures have made, even for our learning. Most needful it is, no doubt, that the destined ministers of the Gospel, besides acquiring the knowledge of those deep things, should be early trained to perceive *when* they touch the limits of legitimate inquiry, lest they should be tempted afterwards to exceed them. But watchful care should be used in the process of study to turn all attainments of this kind to the purposes of adoration, thanksgiving, and self-humiliation; for better far are the shallowest thoughts and sentiments of the most unlettered Christian if they only embrace the truth, and minister to the nourishment of piety and love to God, than all the fruits of the profoundest discernment and learning, when abused to foster presumption, abate reverence, or chill the spiritual sensibilities of the heart.

## LECTURE III.

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### MISSION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

HAVING already inquired what the Scripture teaches regarding the Person, the Godhead, and the Procession of the Holy Ghost, we advance next, in the natural order of the subject, to his *Mission*. And since God does nothing in vain; since the bestowal, especially of a gift so inestimable as the Divine Spirit, cannot but be designed to produce the most extensive and important effects, it seems warrantable to include under the term "His Mission," not merely the act of sending him, but also the office with which, as God's messenger, he is invested, and the high functions which, in discharge of that office, he exercises. In this comprehensive sense, indeed, the word Mission is often used.

1. If we begin, however, with the leading idea, that of *sending* the Spirit, it must be unnecessary to dwell upon the obvious remark that change of place, an accident appropriate to finite beings, is not meant to be ascribed at all to this Divine Person, who, holding the same essence with the Father and the Son, fills heaven and earth eternally with his presence. It is the turning of his intents and the addressing of his power to those new and extraordinary operations, required for carrying out the plan of redemption to its pre-determined results among men—it is this properly that is signified by *sending* the Spirit. He is sent when he applies his glorious attributes by the will of the

Senders to the execution of their high designs. Nor does such procedure imply any subjection flowing from inferiority of nature in God's Free Spirit (for so he is characterized (Ps. li. 12), but exhibits rather such unity of counsel, will, and workings with the other Persons of the Godhead as could be reached by nothing less than absolute identity of substance also.

2. To the next inquiry, namely, who sent this Spirit, so much that is applicable was stated in the last lecture, though with another view, that it would be tedious to do more at present than repeat one testimony, that He was sent by the Father, (John xiv. 16), "I will pray the Father and He will give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth:" and another testimony that he was sent by the Son, (John xv. 26), "When the Comforter is come, whom *I will send* unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, He shall testify of me."

3. But it is essential to observe, in the third place, that the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Church is declared by our Lord to be dependent upon his own death and exaltation. Instructing his disciples on that night on which He was betrayed, "It is expedient for you," he said, "that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (John xvi. 7). The words are not to be understood as affirming that no communication of the Spirit could be made to men at all until after the Saviour had been crucified; for nothing is more certain than that patriarchs and prophets, and all the holy men of old, were savingly made partakers of his benefits. It was only, however, by anticipation that they were so. The meritorious cause of their privilege was still the sacrifice of the Son of God, unchangeably predestined,—and infallibly to be offered up in the fulness of time. For as there could be no remission of sins without shedding of blood, and no saving fellowship of the Spirit without remission of sins, so the redemption of the transgressions which were under the



first Testament including the law of Moses (Heb. ix. 15 ; Rom. iii. 25), is expressly referred by Paul to the death of Christ as Mediator of the New Testament—and consequent again upon that redemption he teaches us, is the receiving by them that are called of the promise of “eternal inheritance,” involving the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is, as he elsewhere says, *the earnest* of it. (Eph. i. 14). But though, during the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations the goodness of God hastened to forgive sin and so impart his Spirit before the atonement had yet been made, still it was not till after that event, by which his righteousness in the remission of former sins, and of all sins, was declared,—by which it was made to appear that he was just in justifying the ungodly that believed in Jesus—it was not till then that the full effusion of the Holy Ghost could fitly take place. Nay, Christ must not only die, but be raised again from the dead and exalted to glory, ere in the eye of sovereign wisdom it could be meet to exhibit on earth such signs of enlarged peace and favour as were given in the wonders of Pentecost, or pour forth on the Church that unexampled abundance of spiritual gifts and graces which was to render the Gospel dispensation pre-eminently the “ministration of the Spirit” (2 Cor. iii. 8).

4. Preliminary to the direct explanation of the office of the Holy Ghost, one other point requires to be well attended to. He is sent,—sent by the Father and the Son,—sent in virtue of the Son’s accomplished work—but *to whom?*—This is a fourth important question—To whom is he sent? The promise it is obvious (we need not re-quote it) was originally made to the Eleven. With respect to them individually its purport was that the Spirit, soon to rest upon them, should endow them richly with that special wisdom, power, holiness, and comfort, which were requisite for the discharge of their high stewardship. Nor would it be understood otherwise than as securing in season and in measure the like benefits to other believers, whether then

living or thereafter to arise. But when the Holy Ghost, in fact, descended, his bounties, it instantly appeared, were not by any means reserved exclusively for men already in the faith. On the day of Pentecost itself, three thousand persons, all unbelievers previously, and among them not a few who had shouted against the Lord to have him crucified, became savingly partakers of His grace. Nay the Apostles themselves, long before that memorable day, had been visited by the Holy Ghost in their natural state AS SINNERS, else they had never recognized or followed the Lord. (Matt. xvi. 16, 17), "Thou art the Christ," said Peter, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Nor was the blessing needed by Peter alone; for "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor. xii. 3.) Evident it is therefore that the Spirit, in the first instance and in a certain sense, is sent to the ungodly world—a truth which is implied even in our Lord's declaration, that "the world cannot receive (λαβειν) him, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." (John xiv. 17.) The fact of His being refused or neglected infers His having been proffered.

5. Sent then from heaven, through the blood-shedding of Christ, to the children of men, what office, in the fifth place, does He bear amongst them? Or, which is the same question in other words, by what name of office is He designated? Various phrases occur in scripture expressive of the several leading branches of the Spirit's work. He is "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation," (Ephesians i. 17.) "The Spirit of power, love, and a sound mind," (2 Timothy i. 7.) "The Spirit of grace and supplications," (Zechariah xii. 10); and many other such titles are applied to Him. But there is only one official name, so far as I am aware, assumed by himself in the Bible, that can

with any probability be regarded as meant to comprehend the whole variety and multitude of his operations under the covenant of grace. It is the title *Παρακλητος*. This word is found altogether but five times in the New Testament. Four times out of the five it occurs in the xiv. xv. and xvi. chapters of John,—the consolatory chapters where it is applied by our Lord to the Holy Spirit; the fifth time it occurs in the 1st Epistle of John ii. 1, where it designates the Lord Jesus himself. “If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

Now, if for the proper signification of this word we have recourse to the Lexicons, three different meanings, or rather three shades of one and the same meaning will be found ascribed to it. 1. In a loose and general sense—first *παρακλητος* signifies, a person called in to give any kind of countenance or aid to another when his cause is pleaded in a court of justice. Scapula interprets it, “*accersitus et rogatus ut faveat alicui in judicio.*” 2. In a stricter sense—again, the word signifies a pleader or intercessor, “deprecator,” “intercessor.” 3, and lastly. “Consolator” a Comforter. This last rendering of the term, as used by our Lord in his farewell address to his disciples, has been preferred, as you know, by the English translators—“He will send you another Comforter.” The reason is not difficult to be understood. It was allowable to regard the Holy Spirit chiefly as a Comforter, on an occasion when need of comfort was so urgent and engrossing, and when the words of Jesus himself were so obviously designed to impart it, more especially as it is unquestionable, that the other operations of the Holy Spirit in all their variety, terminate in everlasting consolation to all the people of God. We must not overlook the fact, however, that in saying of the Paraclete (John xiv. 26), “He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you,” Christ presents to our attention a

view of the Paraclete's work, different from that of strictly ministering comfort, and far more comprehensive. When, moreover, our Lord claims the title of first Paraclete to himself, saying, "I will send you another"—and when John accordingly in his epistle describes him as "our Paraclete with the Father," our minds are clearly directed to look for the perfect pattern, the full exemplification, of the Spirit's advocacy in that of Jesus himself. The two indeed must appear not only like, but strictly conjoined, and all but identified, when we recollect that whatever Christ as Mediator performed in flesh, whether as interceding for men in heaven, or testifying, whether directly in His own person or mediately through His servants for God on earth, was done throughout by the power of the Holy Ghost. With this largest conception of the Spirit's office, the course generally followed by translators is at least consistent. The Vulgate and Montanus, and Tremellius re-translating from the Syriac, retain in the Gospel of John the original word *Paracletus*, sensible apparently that the Latin furnished no term precisely equivalent. Beza everywhere translates it *Advocatus*. Tremellius does so in the Epistle: where the English version also has "advocate." "We have an **ADVOCATE** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

How far this idea that the offices of the two Divine Paracletes are parallel and co-extensive is warranted or not by the representations of Scripture, will sufficiently appear when we proceed, as we may now do, to attempt illustrating the one by the other—comparing the less conspicuous, and as it were retiring functions of the Holy Spirit, with the mediatorial works of Christ, which from their very nature are more prominent and striking.

It is a plain axiom then, of reason, and the apostle Paul adopts it, that "a mediator is not a mediator of one." (Gal. iii. 20.) There must be at least two parties, alienated besides, or estranged from each other, where there is needed a days-man be-

twixt them that shall lay his hand on both, (Job ix. 33.) When God and man, at variance through sin were to be reconciled, the Mediator between them, appointed as He was through the free mercy of God, must begin with satisfying heavenly justice, and using his rightful intercession on man's behalf, ere God can vouchsafe him His peace: And on the other side, when pardon and grace and salvation have thus been provided, He must present them in such a way to man's unbelieving and carnal heart, that his blindness shall be enlightened, his enmity subdued, his allegiance re-established, and his whole nature brought afresh into willing fellowship with his Creator. Here is the twofold office of the first Paraclete—to interpose first with God for men, and next with men for God.

Now in both the departments of this His high ministry, the second Paraclete was ever with him as his fellow-worker. And we must not think that *here* the Holy Spirit was putting forth His divine power in a sphere distinct from that which belonged to Him as the advocate and comforter of men; for it was with Christ as now incarnate, the first-born among many brethren, and fully vested with His headship as the second Adam, that He so co-operated: and in the prosperous all-sufficiency of his influences as thus affecting the person and work of the Lord Jesus,—in that was laid the sole but stable basis of all the benefits which He subsequently accumulated upon the heirs of salvation. Is it, however, matter of express testimony in Scripture that the Holy Ghost did really uphold the Saviour's humanity in all the labours and sufferings of His Mediatorship? Hear the words of the prophet Isaiah, and consider well their meaning and their compass (xi. 1—2) “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots, and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.” It cannot be necessary

to prove by formal references what is familiarly known to every one, that this last expression, "the fear of the Lord," is the common Old Testament phrase for the whole of religion, and means in practice a life of godly obedience. Now what was religion in that Rod from the stem of Jesse? "Being in the form of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, when he had made himself of no reputation, and taken upon him the form of a servant, and been made in the likeness of man,"—what *then* was godly obedience in the Son of the Most High? It was to fulfil in faith and love what He had of old undertaken. It was to open a way for the love of God to sinners by making atonement for their sins. It was to "humble himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 8.) This in Him was the "fear of the Lord," and the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of that fear, we are told by the prophet, rested upon him—superadding to the zeal and fervour of all godly purpose in His soul, the "'knowledge,' 'understanding,' 'wisdom,' 'counsel,'" and to crown all, the "might" by which He was to triumph in His glorious enterprize.—Therefore, just as it is certain that the Godhead of the Lord Jesus, who upholdeth all things by the word of His power, upheld specially His own humanity in its natural frame and faculties under a weight of anguish that must otherwise have crushed them; so also it is manifest that it was the presence and power of the Divine Spirit, the source of all holiness in the human soul, which bent up the will and heart of Jesus in His hour of agony to a height of constancy and endurance that should infallibly conquer temptations too fiery and terrible otherwise for any created thing to abide. By the spiritual aid, then, of that Paraclete, the nature of whose office we are investigating, the Captain of our salvation gained His decisive victory; and earned the crown for Himself and for us. If here our first Advocate provided the means in His own blood, of placing the cause of sinners on a foundation of righteousness



before the Father's throne ; here also the hand of our second Advocate was with Him, both needfully and effectually, working according to the glory of His power, the specialty of His operation, and the order of His plan among the Persons of the Godhead. By His concurrence in the faultless obedience of Christ, the Holy Spirit *also* pleaded the cause of man with God.

In like manner, again, the Holy Ghost co-operated with our Lord in all the methods by which he pleaded the cause of God with men. Wonderful is the condescension through which the Great God, the Almighty King, stoops to vindicate His character and ways among His rebellious creatures, and seek peace with them by saying, "Come, let us reason together." It is, however, a fact unquestionable that the whole aim of our Saviour's personal ministry, of His preaching, discussions, miracles, ordinances—nay, of His death itself, His resurrection and ascension, in their bearing upon the judgments and consciences of men, was to remove the prejudice, appease the hostility, dispel the fear, assure the distrust that kept men at a distance from God ;—if His persuasion succeeded, to establish them in the peace and joy of God's dear children ; or if it failed, at least to make it manifest that the sin of their estrangement, and the blame of their destruction lay wholly with themselves. But did He do any of these things without the Holy Ghost ? No : by the power of that Spirit He was born of woman—He increased in wisdom—He baffled the tempter—He cast out devils—He did all His wonderful works. By the grace of that Spirit poured into His lips He spake as never man spake. For "He whom God hath sent," says John the Baptist (iii. 34), "speaketh the words of God : for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." Did that Spirit leave Him when he left our world ? Surely not. If that Spirit ministered to His earthly faith and patience, much more, we may well conclude, does He sustain

His heavenly strength and joy? If there was place for such aids in the discharge of His prophetic functions here below, how much more enlarged and bright the field for their employment where he now plies His priestly intercessions and exerts His royal prerogatives amid the innumerable company of saints and angels, and before the presence of His Father's glory? Then doubtless the chiefest blessing, intellectual and moral, of every soul of man, the fellowship, namely, of God's Holy Spirit, is not unfelt, but enjoyed incomparably by that super-eminent, that matchless man, united personally with Godhead, who reigns in all worlds, and is for ever the heir of all things. Yet even in this the heavenly communication of His divine riches and love to Jesus, the Spirit ceases not to be our Advocate. In the heart and lips of Christ He pleads for us,—in the right arm of Christ He shields, He nourishes, He rules us. Isaiah, in the passage already quoted, does not stop short with declaring His influence on the Saviour's vicarious obedience only, but goes on to describe the effects which should follow when Jesus, having still the same Spirit resting upon Him should come in His kingdom. (Isa. xi. 3—9.) “And He, the Spirit, shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the

weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea!" These things Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost will yet accomplish over all the world. What greater wonders then shall be wrought when, by the same Spirit, He appears to quicken the mortal bodies of His saints, to judge mankind in righteousness, and bring His redeemed home to everlasting habitations!

We have shortly considered the office of the Paraclete as exercised in the person of Christ. It remains to speak of its bearing on the world at large, and its operation especially within the Church of God.

## LECTURE IV.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT USES MEANS.

#### I. THE MIRACULOUS.

WHEN the Scripture would express the relation between Christ and His people, it calls Him "the First-born among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29). Two things pertain inseparably to this relation; "It behoves Him in all things to be made *like* unto his brethren." (Heb. ii. 17.) "And in all things He must have the *pre-eminence*." (Col. i. 18.) *Like* He must be, because a Brother—*pre-eminent*, because the First-born. And if both these characteristics belong to Him, as chief among the Sons of God the Father, we might expect to find them signally recognised in the relation also which He bears to the other Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. Accordingly that Spirit is described as resting upon Him; then as resting alike upon Him and His people; but upon Him without measure, and, for His own sake,—upon them in a limited degree and only through His merits. So, just as the Eternal Godhead of the Son which upholdeth all things (Heb. i. 3) was so united to His humanity, as infallibly to uphold its natural frame and faculties in the discharge of all the Mediatorial functions, whether belonging to His deepest abasement or to His highest exaltation at God's right hand; even so throughout the same wide range of His temptations and rewards, did the Holy Spirit constitute, sustain, and exalt His moral and spiritual perfections in their ineffable height of sublime and glorious holiness. Having formerly endeavoured to contemplate these influences of the

Paraclete, in the person of Immanuel, God manifest in the flesh, let us now inquire what the Scripture testifies of His agency among mere men, sent as he is, through Christ, to the sinful progeny of Adam.

The better to comprehend this, let us always bear in remembrance, that employed in the glorious work of reconciling God to men and men to God, there are two Paracletes, and that their operations throughout are combined and parallel, and co-extended. But it arises from the nature of their undertaking, that the order of their procedure should differ, according to the difference of place and character in the parties between whom they are transacting. When Christ, as the representative of sinners, would persuade God (not as if He were unwilling) to grant them His peace, He must begin with rendering, by the Spirit, a true and full satisfaction on their behalf, and it is only through the perfection of His obedience, when completed, that He obtains in his mediatorial capacity, acceptance and the blessing for himself and them. But when, as the representative of the Father, He would persuade sinners to be at peace with God, then He must begin with freely proffering to them by the same Spirit the acceptance and blessing already provided for them in His own blood—proffering it purely as a gift—and it is only when they have received the gift, appropriated the acceptance, embraced the blessing, that He calls *them* to new obedience, as the natural expression of unbounded gratitude, and the true preparation for heavenly joy. Now it is the co-operation of the Holy Ghost with Him in this work—not His co-operation, in Christ's own person—for that we formerly considered sufficiently, but in the persons of those whom He calls by the Gospel—it is this which demands our earnest attention now. The *first* part of His gracious function here, as has just been stated, is—

1. To prevail with sinners to accept the free benefits of Redemption by believing in Christ;—and the second—

2. To prepare all those who do believe, through a regenerate nature and a willing service, for partaking of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Remembering then who this Holy Spirit is, from whom sent forth, to whom commissioned, and under what title, let us now attend devoutly to the manner and process of those divine operations, by which as Paraclete He accomplishes all the ends designed of God to be effected among men through the Covenant of Grace. And here the first great fact occurring is this:—

I. That the Holy Spirit acts upon the souls of men, partly by means, and partly by influences; mediately, through the instrumentality of his creatures,—immediately by His own direct and sovereign power.

1. In the first place, He operates by means. And of these which is the highest and chiefest? Out of all comparison the personal ministry of Christ in flesh—which is necessarily adverted to in this connection, not for the purpose of repeating what has been already said, but in order to retain our hold of the great master-means, through which all other means are constituted, and from which they derive their warrant and their efficiency. For, as it was alone by the abasement and exaltation of Jesus through the Spirit, that the gift to us of that Spirit himself became possible; so by the same medium it was, and by that only, that all the wonderful system of means was obtained and established through which that Spirit operates for the conviction and conversion of our souls. Whether we contemplate the age cotemporary with Christ's humiliation, or that which preceded His advent, or those which shall follow His ascension till His second coming, this observation holds true of them all alike. Though not in the order of time, which with God is as nothing, yet in the order of cause and effect, of origination and accomplishment, the earthly ministry of our Lord through the Spirit, procured for the patriarchs of the older world or of Palestine



their visions and their burnt-offerings, as really as for us the instruction of the Apostles or the ordinances of the Gospel.

But now, proceeding from Christ, and on the foundation of His mediatorial work and authority, what further means did the Holy Spirit create and employ—employ in the hands of mere men for carrying out the designs of his mission? They are many and various, but they may be classed under two kinds—the Ordinary and the Miraculous. Of these, since the Miraculous were not only the earliest put forth, but also since it was through them the others received warrant and institution; for this reason it is convenient to speak of the Miraculous first—they are the subjects of this lecture.

1. The Miraculous means then employed by the Paraclete in the persons of His servants are chiefly three—inspired knowledge and wisdom, unerring speech, and works of supernatural power. By the first they received a full and sure understanding of the Divine will; by the second, they were enabled infallibly to expound that will to others; and, by the third, they demonstrated that the message which they delivered was indeed from Heaven—the whole combined forming an instrumentality as indispensably needed as it is visibly adapted to work with powerful effect in turning a sinful world unto God.

1. To be more particular: Inspired knowledge and wisdom was the first gift by which the Paraclete prepared his immediate disciples for their work. Of this we have testimony in the Scripture so often referred to, the last discourse of our Lord to the twelve before He suffered. (John xvi. 12—15,) “I have yet many things to say unto you,” He tells them, “but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth shall come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you. All things

that the Father hath are mine : therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (xiv. 26.) "He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Can any thing be more complete and explicit than this revelation promised them? It makes them sure, by the direct teaching of God the Paraclete of all the knowledge regarding both Christ and the Father, which it concerned their office that they should possess. This of course implies a similar knowledge of the Holy Ghost himself. It embraces, therefore, an inspired understanding of all the Old Testament Scriptures :—and accordingly we find Peter on the very day of Pentecost, by the Spirit then freshly poured upon him, expounding the dark sayings of Joel and of David, with the clearest insight, the soundest reason, and the most assured confidence as to their genuine meaning. It includes moreover a knowledge of all that was peculiar in the doctrines, or promises, or precepts of the Gospel ; for not only did Peter on that occasion exhort the multitude, (Acts ii. 38,) "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;" but afterwards (chap. v. 29,) both Peter and the other Apostles when brought before the High Priest, and all them that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees (ver. 17,) and forbidden to teach in the name of Jesus, (ver. 28,) answered and said, (ver. 29—32,) "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins ; and we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." In these brief sentences are expressed all the main heads of Gospel truth and righteousness, not omitting even its outward observances. Add to all the rest that an unfailing memory of the past was given them—"He shall bring all

things to your remembrance," and a prophetic foresight of the future, "He will shew you things to come"—gifts richly exhibited in the Gospel histories, and in the Revelation of the Apostle John. Add, besides, that some in the Church were endowed with a miraculous discernment of spirits, (1 Cor. xii.); detecting at once all false pretenders to inspiration, and all erroneous doctrine—and it will be apparent how excellent a means of instructing sinners was provided by the Heavenly Paraclete in the miraculous illumination of Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, at the beginning of the Gospel age. Not that the gift of the Spirit through Jesus Christ was reserved for that latter day exclusively; for, be it always borne in mind, his inspiration rested as truly on Adam and Abraham, on Moses and Malachi, as on the Galilean fishermen, or on Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles, as one born out of due time. Ere we pass from the present topic, it well deserves a single remark, that the Paraclete, the author of all religious means, in His love for adopting man into the fellowship of even His miraculous work, bestowed His extraordinary gifts, by special privilege, upon all those to whom the Apostles deemed it needful to impart them by prayer and the imposition of hands. (Acts viii. 15—17.)

2. Furnished thus, so far as regarded their message, with a knowledge truly perfect and Divine, the Paraclete supplied his servants next with a miraculous power of language by which to convey that knowledge to others. Both in writing and in articulate speech, power was given them to declare the truth with infallible exactness, propriety, and force. This endowment had reference first to the languages which were native to them, or which they had acquired by natural methods. While under inspiration, Moses wrote or spoke Hebrew; Daniel, Chaldee; and Paul, Greek, with the same unerring precision, as to the announcement of his meaning, whether any of them were using his mother tongue, or using what he had learned as a foreign

language. The privilege in this particular, which Paul claims as his own, belonged equally, it is evident, to all inspired men. (1 Cor. ii. 12, 13.) "Now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." To this supernatural command over languages naturally acquired, was added the still more wonderful power of speaking on the instant, as occasion arose, the dialects of the most distant and dissimilar nations who might form their audiences; expressing clearly, and with perfect ease and fluency, the sublime mystery of the Gospel in languages polished or barbarous which had never expressed them before, and the sounds of which the speakers, it might be, had never heard till uttered by their own lips. Whether the gift of tongues were reserved or not for the Gospel age, appears not absolutely certain. The Mosaic dispensation was national, and scarcely seemed to require it. Yet at the time when Jonah the son of Amittai, (2 Kings xiv. 25,) was sent to prophesy against Nineveh, it is not likely that, if speaking the language of Samaria, he would have been so universally understood in the Assyrian capital. In any case it is manifest that the abundance of this gift, from the day of Pentecost till the death of the Apostles, or after, was limited by nothing but the call existing for its use. Then it was that the Spirit signalized His power of multiplying tongues for the gathering in of His people, as He had divided them of old for the dispersion of His enemies. The Apostles were all with one accord in one place. (Acts ii. 2—11.) "And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utter-

ance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now, when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed, and marvelled saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God!" Quite as marvellous as this sudden ability to speak strange languages was the additional faculty given to some of instantly and infallibly interpreting them—marvellous alike in its use and in its limitations: For one who spoke the unknown tongue understanding well what he said,—for he edifieth himself, says the Apostle (1 Cor. xiv. 4), might yet be unable infallibly to translate his own words, as appears from the statement that—"Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the Church may receive edifying." (v. 5) "Wherefore," it is added, "let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. (v. 13) And if any man speak in an unknown tongue let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course, and let one interpret; but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the Church; and let him speak to himself and to God." From these words it is natural to conclude that, as there were some who could speak what they could not interpret, there were others who could interpret what they could not speak—who were interpreters merely—a fact which is fully confirmed by the Apostle when he formally enumerates the gifts of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. xii. 8), "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same

Spirit"—and then after a number of particulars—"to another diverse kinds of tongues, *to another* the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." By this wonderful command then of the great instrument of human converse, language,—committed whether to the tongue or pen, the truths of God, proclaimed with infallible clearness had free course within a single generation through every land betwixt the shores of Southern India, and the Atlantic coasts of Britain and of Spain. By this means the Divine oracles have acquired and will maintain the foremost place among the written treasures of mankind, from the hour when Christ first gave to Moses the handwriting of his Ordinances on the top of Mount Sinai, until the day when, at His second coming, the great white throne shall be set and other books shall be opened.

3. One other class of supernatural means employed by the Paraclete remains to be mentioned, namely, Miracles—the visible and palpable proofs by which the doctrine and testimony of Christ's messengers were demonstrated to be from heaven. The gifts of prophecy and of tongues were indeed themselves stupendous miracles, and had accordingly the effect of such (1 Cor. xiv. 22—25), "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not—that is, not for them only—but for them that believe. If, therefore, the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." But whilst the chief object of these miracles was



instruction, though they were demonstrations too, yet there were other miracles of which the direct use was demonstration, although none of them of course could fail to convey knowledge of the mercy and righteousness and power of God. So when the words of Peter inflicted sudden death on Ananias and Sapphira, or called back Dorcas to life—when Paul at Cyprus struck Elymas with blindness, or at Malta released Publeus from his languishing sickness, the main intention was to convince and assure all beholders that these men were indeed ambassadors of God commissioned to enlighten mankind. But this topic is too familiar to require enlargement. In conclusion, let us rather observe and note it well, how that same Spirit who was given fully to Christ was also given wondrously to His followers—how it breathed alike in the Master and the disciples—how the Paraclete, common to both, made them one in wisdom, word, and work—how by Him the Lord of the household communicated His own strength and sufficiency to His stewards—how the First-born of the family identified thus His own soul with the souls of its elder brethren—how the Prophet of God's own bosom, the matchless Preacher of righteousness, the Worker of all signs and wonders, multiplied himself as it were by the Spirit in the persons of his inspired ministers! But the process does not end here. On their inspiration rests the authority of all ordinary ministrations. With them are inseparably linked the under-stewards, the younger brotherhood of the spiritual household. To them also, directly from the same Head, is the same Spirit, less visibly but not less effectually imparted;—and of the command by which ordinary means of grace are instituted, and the spiritual gifts by which the administrators of them are qualified and sustained, of these it will be our business to inquire at next opportunity.

The Lord bless his truth for our instruction and encouragement. And to His name be glory! Amen.

## LECTURE V.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT USES MEANS.

#### II. THE ORDINARY.

IT was a sublime description which David, taught of old by the Spirit of prophecy, gave of the future exaltation of his Lord, and of its effects upon a fallen world; (Ps. lxxviii. 18), "Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Equally sublime, and as becomes the latter dispensation, far more enlarged and explicit is the view presented to us by Paul of the same all-important event, and of its consequences, begun already in his day to be signally brought to pass. (Eph. iv. 4—13), "There is one body," says he, speaking of the church, "and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of *the gift of Christ*. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And He gave"—let us mark the gift—"He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son

of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”—So far as this remarkable passage refers to the office of the Paraclete, we find him represented first of all as spiritually pervading the entire body of the Church, and constituting the very soul and life of all its members indiscriminately. “There is one body and one Spirit.” Next we perceive that certain kinds and degrees of spiritual power are conferred by Him, only on certain chosen individuals; for this is plainly declared in the statement, that “unto every one is given according to the *measure* of the gift of Christ.” And, finally, these individuals themselves, thus enriched and endowed with a heavenly sufficiency, come forth to view a whole hierarchy of officers in God’s household, as forming an essential part of the boon procured and communicated by the Lord Jesus Christ at His ascension, as being indeed the grand instrumentality by which He was to gather in His elect, until He should come again. Whereas, therefore, we observed before from the Scriptures, that the Paraclete achieves His work partly by means and partly by influences, and having not yet advanced so far as the influences, were occupied with considering the means and had perceived them to be of two kinds, miraculous and ordinary: we shall find now that these distinctions apply easily to the doctrine of the passage before us, and more especially to its enumeration of spiritual functionaries in the Church. “He gave some Apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists.” These three may, without impropriety, be called miraculous means: not because the individuals so titled were miracles personally, for they were ordinary men: nor because their offices were exclusively miraculous, for they embraced all ordinary functions; nor even because their miraculous powers—their supernatural knowledge and discernment of spirits—their gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues—their power of working signs and wonders in proof of their mission—pertained exclusively

to themselves;—for these were imparted more or less largely to other Christians:—it is for none of these reasons that we class them as miraculous, but because miracles were in them an OFFICIAL ENDOWMENT, while in others they were apparently but INDIVIDUAL GIFTS; and because that endowment was *essential to their office*, it being impossible for any man to discharge the peculiar functions of Apostle, prophet, or evangelist without miraculous gifts. For the opposite reason, the remaining office-bearers mentioned in this passage, with some others, may be classed as *ordinary* means or instruments;—theirs being a ministry, the duties and offices of which may all of them be efficiently discharged, without miracles, and by the common faculties of human nature, as enlightened by the Scriptures, and sanctified and invigorated by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Under-stewards they certainly are, but, in the wisdom of God, being deemed essential to the completeness, the perpetuity, the good order and prosperity of the household, they, with their divinely-instituted powers, and spiritual, though non-miraculous gifts and agencies, must be regarded as most important, while yet but the ORDINARY means, by which the Holy Spirit pleads the cause of God with men. To this part of the subject we must now attend, having already considered the other, the miraculous part.

To enter particularly, however, upon the institution, and number, and nature of the Gospel offices is the business properly of another portion of our course. For our present purpose, which is simply to view them as instruments of the Holy Spirit, it is sufficient to state that in strictness the common offices which we now speak of may be reduced to two, the Pastorate and the Deaconate;—one to edify the Church in spiritual things, the other to take charge of its secular business:—it being the Lord's intention, by the united services of both, not to take His people out of the world, but to keep them from the

evil. In the matured judgment, however, of the Westminster divines, the pastorate, or, which is the same thing, the eldership, or the episcopate, was so distributed as to separate the officers who held it into three distinct divisions. The first were pastors in the stricter sense, ποιμένες, επισκοποι (Eph. iv. 11); or, as we term them, ministers: the second were teachers, διδασκαλοι (ibid.) doctors among us, so long as the word retained its primitive meaning; and the third, governments, κυβερνήσεις (1 Cor. xii. 28), so the Apostle calls them—in our familiar language, elders. Add to these three, then, the deacons, διακονοι, servants or attendants, whom Paul is understood to designate by the term ἀντιλήψεις, “helps,” agreeably to the occasion of their appointment, recorded in the vi. chap. of Acts—add these,—and we have in the Church by this mode of reckoning four orders in all of spiritual servants, uninspired, but perpetual. What, then, are the ends of their institution? the purposes which their labours are intended to serve? They may be reduced to three,—instruction first, then government, and thirdly, maintenance. Of the last, and of the deacon, whose province it properly is, it would be out of place to say anything farther here, inasmuch as the furnishing of earthly necessities for the divine service (for that is what in this connection, we mean by maintenance), is not directly and in itself a spiritual means at all, but just the method dictated by nature and by the Scriptures for upholding the supply of spiritual means. Instruction and government—these two are the powerful engines, operating directly on the conscience, by which the Paraclete works his will among men, whether unbelieving or regenerate.

In the order of nature, instruction takes the lead—training in the knowledge of the great mystery of Godliness revealed in Holy Writ. The Being, the Perfections, the Counsel, and work of the Most High—the creation and fall of man—the redemption of a people by the blood of the Son of God through faith in

His name—the regeneration of grace—the laws and ordinances of righteousness—the mystery of iniquity—the resurrection from the dead—the final judgment—the everlasting retributions which await the righteous in celestial glory and the wicked in outer darkness,—such are the majestic and momentous themes in which all instructors in the Gospel school, and those who learn of them, must be conversant. In other words, the publication of those truths where they are unknown, and the thorough establishment, illustration, and inculcation of them, where already received, are the proper business of every office-bearer in the Church, who is ordained of the Holy Ghost to labour in word and doctrine.

“Labouring in word,” (1 Tim. v. 17), that is, preaching the Gospel, undoubtedly holds the foremost place in this department. It is the mode of proclaiming the truth which is capable at once of reaching the greatest number of human beings, and of adapting itself best to all diversities of rank, age, and condition. It edifies by thousands the frequenters of our Christian assemblies—it proclaims salvation in the public highways, in the crowded market-places, and even in the very groves and temples of heathen impiety. It affords full employment to all the choicest powers of human nature, both soul and body. All knowledge, wisdom, eloquence, find their best application here. It gives scope to the loftiest enterprise—the most energetic exertions. The world presents no fitter field of noble self-devotion. It is the proper home and native working place of all our highest and holiest affections. And why is it so? Because here it is pre-eminently that the efforts of men are made effectual in gathering to the Lord Jesus the souls whom His blood hath purchased; and here it is as inclusive of direct worship, that God imparting richly to His people the blessings of His salvation, receives in return their purest sacrifices of heartfelt adoration and praise.



Next in importance to "labouring in word" is "labouring in doctrine"—*εν διδασκαλῳ*, in the business of teaching. Whether the Apostle in using the word had reference to elementary schools where children are trained in letters generally, but receive also a Christian instruction, subsidiary to the teaching of parents and pastors,—we need not now inquire. Certain it is that, from the beginning, there were not only catechetical seminaries in which all candidates for Christian baptism were carefully indoctrinated—but also academies or gymnasia, of a more scholastic kind, "in which persons of riper years," says Mosheim, "and especially such as aspired to be public teachers, were instructed in the several branches both of human learning and of sacred erudition." (Cent. 1, chap. iii., § vii.) Both these classes of schools, being instituted by the Apostles, were taught by ecclesiastical men, the same without question whom Paul describes as ("labouring in doctrine") *κοπιωντες εν διδασκαλῳ*. They constitute in the hands of the Holy Spirit another instrument of powerful efficacy for diffusing and perpetuating without miracle the knowledge and faith of the Gospel. By His warrant, our missionaries aim to convert the heathen through a Christian education. By His warrant, our pious eldership, with their assistants, devote themselves to Sabbath-day tuition. By His warrant, our pastors subject the applicants for holy communion to a course of previous training. And by His warrant, our halls of theological study are supplied with ordained instructors; that from one generation to another the godly youth whom He moves to consecrate their strength to the ministry may be fully nurtured in the learning, the capacity, and the spirit, which shall qualify them, ere they too pass away, to vindicate the truth and extend the kingdom of God our Saviour in the earth. So much for the first object of the Ministry-instruction.

The religion of Christ, however, is not a doctrine merely, but *a life*. Hence government is as needful in the Church as

knowledge ; and hence the precept (Heb. xiii. 17), “ Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.” In what manner of life then should the people of God be disciplined ? In coming forth from the world’s wickedness, and being separate—in observing the ordinances and seeking the peace of God’s household ; in cherishing the knowledge, the faith, the love of the First-born, its Head ; in aspiring to the fulness of a spiritual fellowship with the Father, and to the intimacy of dearest brotherhood with his children ; in discountenancing all sin ; multiplying all works of faith and labours of love—that God may be known in the present holiness and comfort of His elect, as well as glorified in their final salvation. But that these objects will naturally be much advanced by the presence of consecrated overseers, awed under the sense of their high responsibility, and quickened with the zeal of the Master Shepherd Himself, it is not difficult to see. . Recognized in their office as Christ’s servants, nay, chosen to it, in a sense, by the people of their charge, when such men, themselves the patterns of all holy living, guide the zealous, and animate the cold, sustain the feeble, and urge the strong to action ;—when in love they warn the tempted, rebuke the disobedient, restore the fallen, confirm and encourage the upright—nay, when under compulsion of their vows, they utterly seclude, or even cut off the stubborn transgressor of Christ’s law, if perchance through this last act of gracious discipline God may give him repentance—when they do all these things according to the Word of God, before the eyes of enlightened believers, though any wise man may divine, yet none but eye-witnesses can sufficiently apprehend what a powerful instrument is Christian rule in the Paraclete’s hand, both for convincing the adversaries and aiding the righteous to grow in grace and keep themselves unspotted from the world.

Such are the immediate ends of the Pastorate, Instruction,

and Government. In practice they are not very rigorously distributed among the three descriptions of office-bearers into which the Pastors, Bishops, Presbyters—call them by which of these names you please—are divided. For while the main business of the minister is preaching and government, it is also competent for him to teach: While the proper employment of the teacher of course is teaching, he may also take part in preaching and government; and, while the elder's peculiar work is government, he is not precluded, if qualified, from teaching and exhortation. The wisdom which devised the pastoral office endowed it with an elasticity capable of adapting itself to the endless diversity of circumstances in which His Church on earth should be placed.

I shall not dwell now upon the collective powers exercised by church rulers in councils and consistories. These also, it is true, are of Divine appointment—and constitute indeed the principal strongholds in this world of pure doctrine and of holy discipline. But their uses are mainly of a defensive or constructive character; while our concern at present is more directly with the means of *aggression*, through which the Holy Spirit makes war upon the kingdom of darkness.

Passing, then, from these, it were still less within our range to speak at large of means not strictly ecclesiastical—the social and domestic training, for instance, which the Lord has entrusted to parents and private Christians—or that continual series of intermingled judgments and mercies by which His own Providence fails not vigorously to exercise the graces of all His disciples. Yet it would be too considerable an oversight to omit all mention of them in the list of spiritual instrumentalities;—for though men without doubt are united in tribes and families, and are subject to the sovereignty of Heaven, where the mercies of the Gospel are unknown,—still it is manifest that within the kingdom of grace there are superinduced

upon all the relations of ordinary life, and upon the whole procedure of the Divine government, special characters, peculiar arrangements, expressly calculated to promote the conversion and edification of men's souls, such as are not to be found beyond the sacred frontiers. And if the operation of the Holy Ghost through those specific means be not only unquestionable, but most extensive and conspicuous, certain it is that the means themselves came not otherwise than by the Cross,—certain it is that they are among the benefits procured by the Lord Jesus, “when He ascended on high, leading captivity captive, and received gifts for men.”

One observation more may suffice to conclude this deduction, but it is one of the greatest importance. Although the guides of the Church since the apostolic age have been uninspired men, it were quite a mistake to imagine that their pastoral efforts, so far as they were legitimate, have not had all the authority and all the efficiency of inspiration. In the case of apostles, prophets, evangelists, we must distinguish betwixt the operation of the Spirit from without, communicating knowledge, and the internal act of their minds receiving it. The vision of Peter at Joppa, in which “he saw heaven opened and a certain vessel descending unto him, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things” (Acts x. 11)—this was one thing—the doubting of Peter in himself what this vision should mean, and his conclusion that by it God showed him that he should not call any man common or unclean, this was quite another thing. The command, “Behold, three men seek thee, arise, therefore, get thee down and go with them”—this is a matter by itself; the process of mind and will through which Peter obeys the command is a thing equally distinct on the other side. The vision, the command, were given by the Spirit—the perception, the reasoning, the consequent action, were the Apostle's part.

To inspire belonged to God, to understand and do belonged to His servant. Now to us, in these latter days, the Scriptures just come in the place of the inspiration. This is all the difference. As to our natural powers of thought and action, we are exactly on the same level with Peter. Our disadvantage, if disadvantage it really be, is that the Holy Ghost instead of teaching us by figures in the imagination, or voices in the ear, commits his mind to us in a written volume. To learn the truth, indeed, we require not only careful study, but illuminating grace. But Peter himself informs us (1 Pet. i. 10—12), that this was precisely the case with inspired men also, in regard to the very matter of their own revelations. "Of which salvation," says he, "the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed (not by miracle alone, it is evident, but by the Spirit's blessing on their own researches also,) unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel." Nor is it only in the department of doctrine, but also in that of *ruling* the household of faith, that the ordinary ministry comes much nearer the miraculous, than is at first sight apparent. The very apostles, after the foundations were once firmly laid, seemed to have governed the Churches by aid of their own former inspirations, very much in the same way that we do by the Scriptures. The Divine *Afflatus* was occasional; it was only the knowledge which it bestowed that was perpetual; and of that they made use, as their successors are called to do now, in the reverential exercise of a christian judgment. The grace which sanctifies the heart and directs the conduct, whether

in regard to their personal salvation, or to the right discharge of the ministry, was as necessary to them as to us. To some who could truly say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name," the answer was, "I never knew you:"—and even Peter when the needful influence was for some holy reason temporarily withdrawn, soon acted so in the Church at Antioch, that a brother apostle must withstand him to the face, because he was to be blamed. The heavenly aids then which were indispensable to them, are sufficient for us, and, blessed be God! they are promised. We stood represented in the eleven, when Jesus said unto them, "Behold, I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Amen." And so the identical words which conveyed all needful aid to them, secure it no less infallibly to us. With the throne of mercy, therefore, open to us, and with the sacred oracles in our hands, let no grace or talent be lacking, that either strenuous application can extract from the world's learning, or believing prayer can bring down upon us from the heavens, to qualify us for skilfully searching, and assuredly believing, and soundly interpreting, and eloquently preaching, and in all the functions of our office and tenor of our life, zealously observing, and moving others to observe the holy commandment of our God! Through such preparation, may it prove at last, that during the lapse of our brief and troublous time, God, by our feeble instrumentality, in part, has himself wrought mightily, to extend his truth in the generations following, that it may spread and prosper till the world close. To each of us it will soon be said, "Go thou thy way till the end be." May the sequel also be accomplished in each—"Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days!" Amen.



## LECTURE VI.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT USES INFLUENCES.

#### POWERFUL, FREE.

WE were last engaged in contemplating the vast and admirable system of means, which the Holy Ghost established, and by which he works in his character of Paraclete—the Great Advocate for God among sinners, and the only Intercessor in the heart of sinners when they call on God. By this Divine Person, Christ himself, we saw, as regards His humanity, was generated, endowed, sustained; in all points abundantly furnished for the discharge of all his offices, and borne onward with an omnipotent sufficiency to the accomplishment of all his designs. By this Spirit were the immediate servants of Christ, his inspired ambassadors qualified with heavenly wisdom, strength, love for their high stations as head stewards in the household of faith. And by him, in short, are all his humbler agents in the Church, whether office-bearers or private members,—the Holy Scriptures in the hands, and their providence of Jesus for their trust—made fully meet, every man in his day and calling, for contributing his weak, yet not ineffective co-operation to the accomplishment of God's everlasting decrees. But one thing here requires our special attention. How complicated soever the agency, it operates at last by a single instrument—the word. Whether in the person of Christ himself, or of his disciples, the sole organ of the Holy Spirit is the Gospel. The Gospel, from first to last, announcing to apostate and perishing man, a

free forgiveness through the blood of Immanuel, a perfect sanctification through the grace of God, and in the sequel resurrection and eternal life—this sum of all glad tidings, if we view its results in their final completeness, is the great, the only means by which the Divine Spirit working in his ministers, leaves the world of unbelievers inexcusable, and converts the heirs of salvation unto God.

It is, however, of the very nature of an instrument to execute nothing by itself. The most perfect, the most powerful engine, can never approach by one hair-breadth to the fulfilment of its uses, without a force to execute, and a mind to direct its action. So it is with this mighty engine of God. It can work no saving effect so long as it is not actuated and guided by the Spirit of God. Still it holds true, that the Spirit does not ordinarily put forth His power, at least upon the souls of adult persons, otherwise than by employing the word. Not only where He has deigned to make use of human agency, but even in his immediate operation, in the persons of inspired men, the word, that is the truth clothed in the forms of human speech, (it matters nothing whether audibly or not), appears constantly to have been presented to their minds. When the first transgressors are to be reclaimed, it is through the express promise of a Saviour. When the second great parent of mankind is to receive warning and commandment for the saving of his house, it is in terms capable of insertion into the written record. When Saul of Tarsus in one hour becomes a new creature by the Spirit's hand upon him, it is not without a voice testifying from heaven, "I am Jesus." In short, if, on the one hand, the apostles were by miracle to be endowed on the day of Pentecost, the fiery emblems that rested upon them typified not less fitly their master's former words of promise and general instruction, then fully brought to their remembrance, than the tongues with which they were afterwards to teach the nations ;

or if, on the other hand, the door of salvation was by ordinary preaching to be opened to the Gentiles, beginning with the household of Cornelius, it was when Peter had begun to speak, that "the Holy Ghost fell upon them," says he, "as upon us at the beginning." The rule, therefore, is universal in the case of persons capable of understanding truth, that, as on one side, the letter unblest by the Spirit killeth, so, on the other, it is not without the letter, but by it that the Spirit maketh alive. Paul, accordingly, gives place to the sentence, by which those who put the word of God away from them, had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life—(Acts xiii. 46); while Peter describes believers at large, as men "who have purified their souls in obeying the *truth* through the *Spirit*, . . . being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible; by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter i. 22—23.)

It is impossible to overrate, in a practical point of view, the importance of this invariable conjunction of the Divine word and Spirit, in the work of bringing the testimony of God to bear upon the world. Without it, the specious pretensions of imposture and enthusiasm could not be seasonably refuted. Without it, the zeal and devotedness of godly men could never be clearly vindicated. But since, in the actual economy as it stands, all spiritual effects are wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost *through* the word, and therefore, in perfect conformity with it; the moment that error, superstition, or fanaticism appears, however plausibly veiled in the garb of wisdom or sanctity, its departure from the Scripture, a character inseparable from its nature, gives instant proof that its author is another spirit than the Spirit of God. And just in like manner, on the other side, while it DOES happen, that the real champions and ambassadors of the truth, besides maintaining that even course of holy living which all must approve, are sometimes urged to such heights of holy enterprize, and such ardour of Christian exertion, as the

world, and many Christians even, are apt to deem the fruit of an unsound and unwarranted enthusiasm—while also they are not unfrequently led into such depths of self-sacrifice and willing mortification, as seem to exhibit the exaggeration rather than the essence of true sobriety, and thus create suspicion of ascetism or sinister design;—yet, notwithstanding, their conduct being really prompted by the rule of Scripture, in its just application to the exigencies of their calling—being consequently wrought in them by that Spirit whose grace is as surely the source of all that the Scripture dictates, as it is not the source of aught that the Scriptures prohibits or omits—their conduct being such—can be justified from the sacred Scriptures, both to the satisfaction of their brethren, and to the conviction of their adversaries; and they can affirm, so that no man can effectually gainsay it, “if we be beside ourselves, it is unto God, and if we be sober, it is for his people’s sake.”

II. It was formerly laid down as a division useful for our direction in contemplating the work of the Holy Spirit, that He operated in a two-fold manner, first, by Means; secondly, by Influences. Having now completed a brief survey of the MEANS, let us next proceed—may they rest upon us in the exercise!—to consider the INFLUENCES. This term has been selected simply as supplying a natural contrast to the word “Means.” It has sometimes been employed in the service of their error by Socinians, and others, who regard the Holy Ghost as nothing but an Influence, denying His personal subsistence, and His attributes as a Person; and reducing even the operations of His grace to one category with the ordinary actings of Divine power in sustaining the natural faculties and activities of man. I need not remark that we understand the term in a sounder sense as fitted indeed to indicate the secrecy and silence and gentleness of the Spirit’s agency, but not to de-

tract from its power, still less to disguise or question his distinct personality and glory.

But while keeping fully in view the Divine all-sufficiency of the Holy Spirit, let us not forget that for the present our inquiries are limited to one particular field of His operation. What bearing His power as Divine must have upon dead nature or upon animal life, or even upon the worldly thoughts and ways of the heathen while cut off from all knowledge of revealed truth,—are questions belonging to another department of theology. Our concern now is alone with his operation as Paraclete, with that most peculiar and most glorious exertion of his heavenly energies in which he acts upon the spiritual state and destiny of mankind through the covenant of grace.

It is not a little interesting when we search for instruction here, to find the foundation of our knowledge laid broad and deep in the words of our Saviour Himself. Prompted by the Spirit He testifies concerning the Spirit—(John iii. 8)—“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” The strict grammatical structure of this remarkable sentence, were we, like some interpreters, to be guided by that only, would indicate that the comparison is made between the wind and the person himself who is regenerated, “The wind bloweth where it listeth—so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” The meaning then would be—(1.) That such a man must bear a peculiar character, must speak and act in a manner appropriate to his class, as visited by the breath of heaven—“thou hearest the sound thereof.” (2.) That his singularity is matter of choice—“the wind bloweth where it listeth.” (3.) That both the origin and the result of the change wrought on him is beyond all cognizance of natural knowledge—“Thou canst not tell whence it

cometh or whither it goeth"—and these no doubt are truths—truths too designed to be intimated, though indirectly, by the words of our Lord. Yet approaching the subject even from this side, we are presently drawn beyond its first aspect. We are led to inquire by what mighty agency, and by what wonderful process it is, that man becomes thus transformed. Now that is the real question which the passage is intended to meet. Nicodemus had been told that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. He doubted the fact of a second birth, because of its apparent impossibility, "How *can* a man be born when he is old?" The text before us was the instant reproof of this unreasonable incredulity. Alleging the familiar fact that we admit the reality of a great agency in nature, because we perceive its effects, although the immediate cause and manner of it be beyond our search, our Lord shows how utterly contrary it is to this just procedure of our understanding to doubt the reality of a spiritual agency, of which the results are visible and extraordinary, merely because the source and mode of it are at present unknown. If we look then at the design of the speaker—a much safer guide to his meaning than the mere form of his expressions—it becomes clear that, by comparison with the natural phenomena of the wind, he intends to instruct us regarding the operation of the Holy Ghost, both as its reality and efficacy are apparent, and as its origin and procedure are unsearchable.

"The wind bloweth," τὸ πνεῦμα πνεῖ.—Here is distinctly set before us one of the great elements of nature in the act of exerting its natural force, and,—what is not unimportant—designated by a name that includes the idea of breathing, and with this is immediately compared the Holy Ghost, in the exercise of his regenerating influences. It would be overstraining the comparison to say that it was intended formally to teach the *procession*, the *personality*, and the *peculiar functions* of the Spirit,



as in a previous lecture we found them to be elsewhere clearly revealed in Scripture: yet it is well to notice how perfectly it accords with these doctrines. When we proceed, however, to another point, it does seem a legitimate understanding of the parallel to regard it as meant to illustrate—

(1.) The universality and greatness of that quickening power with which the Spirit works. The air all over our world is the element of life—its currents sweep both sea and land, and can not only overturn the feeble obstacles of man's creating, but at the will of Him whose minister it is, can rend the mountains and break the rocks in pieces (1 Kings xix. 11). Is this a just emblem of spiritual influences? Is it brought expressly to reprove the doubts of one who deemed the work ascribed to them impossible? Then certainly we should overlook one main head of the instruction did we fail to see, that the heavenly grace so typified and expounded, which is life to the new-born soul, must have access to men of every condition and character alike—and must act whensoever the Spirit so pleases with a might and efficacy which, however they may be resisted, cannot be overcome. Paul found the matter so in the case of his own conversion. He felt it equally in his apostolic labours, when "striving," as he says, "according to His working who worketh in me mightily;"—and with his experience corresponds his prayer on behalf of the churches, "that the Father would grant them, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might, *δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι*, by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith,—that they might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Col. i. 29; Eph. iii. 16—19.)

(2.) The POWER of Divine grace is not more plainly taught in this parable than its FREEDOM. Air occupies the clear spaces of the firmament, and yields ready obedience to the impulse of those physical causes which naturally determine its action; flowing unrestrained in this direction or in that—near the sur-

face of the earth or in the loftier heavens, as the case may be;—while the clouds that are seen to float in it, far from presenting any obstruction, are the attendants of its course, and display the freedom and the vastness of its motion. There is a variety, too, and a liveliness in its evolutions which, proceeding from unseen causes, look almost like the results of volition: “the wind bloweth where it listeth,” *ὅπου θελεῖ*: and our heavenly Instructor takes special notice of the circumstance,—to what purpose? Just to illustrate the ABSOLUTE LIBERTY and self-determining freedom of choice with which the Holy Spirit imparts or withholds, enlarges or limits his grace. “So is every one that is born of the Spirit.” Such is the agency to which he is subject. Thus it befalls him.

To understand aright this liberty of the Paraclete, we must view it in two different lights—first as regards the other Persons of the Godhead, next as respects mankind.

1. In the former view, as regards the other Persons of the Godhead, when we learn from the Scriptures, that the Holy Ghost “proceedeth” from the Father and the Son, *ἐκπορεύεται* (John xv. 26), that He is sent of Them, according to the words of our Lord, *ὁ πέμψει ὁ Πατήρ*, (John xiv. 26), *ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω*—and that He performs Their works—“I cast out devils by the Spirit of God,” (Matt. xii. 28), the impression is apt to be made upon our minds that He acts by a species of delegated power inconsistent with the notion of a freedom truly absolute and Divine. The prejudice arises from our familiarity with the relations of human life, where commissioned authority proceeds usually from something higher and mightier than itself, by which it is liable to be limited and controlled. But the Three Persons of the Godhead are One Divine Substance. In their mysterious relationship there is an essential order, a natural series, an immutable economy; yet, such as consists with a real and perfect equality between them, in wisdom, power, glory—in all the at-

tributes of Deity. Their will, therefore, is one and indivisible in their unity. In their personality, it is infinitely consistent and harmonious. By the same transcendent liberty with which the Father and the Son willed to send the Spirit in His office and assign His work, did the Spirit will to BE SENT, to assume that office, and to fulfil the Divine purposes which are His own. What supreme and uncontrollable freedom the Lord Jehovah uses in framing, and purposing, and performing all His good pleasure in all things, the same does the Paraclete employ in giving full effect to the Covenant of Redemption. Everything here is drawn from the depth of His own heavenly counsel, which is one with that of the Lord Jesus, and of the Glorious Father himself; and when He cometh forth from age to age, carrying all into execution as it pleaseth Him, this is the very perfection of liberty, the absolute sovereignty of free will.

2. And if there be nothing in the mutual relations of the *Divine Persons* to abridge the freedom of the Holy Spirit, how much less can it be restrained by anything in the creature? There are but two imaginable ways in which man could frustrate His will—the one by escaping beyond the sphere of His power, the other, by abiding its operation and overcoming it. The impossibility of the first, so obvious in itself, is devoutly testified by the Psalmist, (cxxxix. 7), “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?” And, as to the second, stubborn as our carnal resistance to all His influences assuredly is, in all our faculties, yet what understanding of man is there, however blind and prejudiced, which the Spirit of all Wisdom cannot illuminate and undeceive? What heart so profane or so sensual in its affections, which essential holiness itself cannot refine and hallow? What wilful perversity of intention so hard and so malignant which the Divine Paraclete, the Heavenly Ambassador of mercy and love, is unable to disarm, subdue, and animate to new and joyful obedience? Could anything set bounds to His liberty of

action it would be our guiltiness rendering it unjust to show favour any more to such undeservers. But in the Cross of Christ there is all fulness of atonement; and, as the Lord Jesus, by virtue of His blood, imparts His Holy Spirit freely to whomsoever He will, so the Holy Spirit freely by faith interests whom He will in the merits of Christ; and, thenceforth, if it so please Him, in righteousness lavisheth upon him the whole riches of His grace, though he were the very chief of sinners. It is true, the *conquering* operations of His love are reserved for God's elect. In the case of others, His influence, tending to their conviction and conversion, may give way to opposition as soon as their actual character—the enmity of their heart against God—has been unequivocally manifested, without being, as it ought to have been, subdued. But even here, at whatever stage of their contentious resistance His pleadings with them may finally cease, it is not because His strength has been overpowered, but because the measure of His goodness and forbearance freely provided for them has been forespent; and for infinite reasons, existing both in the sinners themselves, and beyond them—reasons unsearchable, perhaps, incommunicable to us—but worthy of the sovereign wisdom, rectitude, and sanctity, He freely determines to strive with such no longer. The sum of all is this—whether we view the outgoings of His power, as regulated by God's eternal decree, or as adjusted to the character and actions of men,—the Holy Ghost is obstructed by no barrier, is subject to no bondage; but as the wind bloweth where it listeth, even so doth this heavenly Breath of Omnipotence apply or refrain His spiritual impulses, when, and how, and to whom, and in what measure, and with what results, He pleaseth.

## LECTURE VII.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT USES INFLUENCES.

#### MYSTERIOUS.

Two characteristics of the Holy Spirit's operation, as described by the Lord, we have endeavoured to consider, namely, its Power and its Liberty. "The wind bloweth"—this movement in nature, when presented as an emblem of Godhead in action, can signify nothing short of an Omnipotent agency ;—"bloweth where it listeth"—this physical liberty, in the like connection, must necessarily impart a sovereign and unlimited freedom of choice.

"Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." These words as distinctly express a THIRD—

3. Characteristic of the operation of the Holy Ghost by the Gospel ; and that is its *Mysteriousness*, the impossibility of describing the Heavenly Regenerator at his work, or penetrating into the secret of its origin, its process, or its end.

As the *beginning* and the *ending* of his work have a natural connection with each other, we may contemplate *them* together, first, and attend to the *process* of the work afterwards. The *figure* then will here be of no use to us again, "thou canst not tell *whence* it cometh, ποθεν ερχεται, or whither it goeth, πω υπαγει. The coming and going of the wind implies a change of place in the element itself, as well as a change of relation to the

objects on which it bears. But in the advent or departure of the all-present Spirit of God there is nothing like locomotion. As to His essence and attributes He is ever within us, ever around us. All the change is in the relation which it pleases Him to assume towards us, as acting, or refraining to act, in a gracious manner upon our souls. Now the source of action in all spiritual natures, the “whence,” the *ποθεν* of their resolutions and their doings is evidently just that sum of motives and considerations by which they are actuated. Or if we change the form of our inquiry, and ask, not whence their conduct proceeds, but whither it tends; not *ποθεν* *ἐρχεται*? but *πὺς ὑπαγει*? what goal would it reach? what object would it carry?—the question is still about the motive just as before. *Why* have they so done? is the meaning in either case. Applying this to the free, all-knowing Spirit of God, therefore we find the import of the Lord’s declaration in regard to Him to be, that we cannot assign the causes and reasons of His holy dealing, whether with those whom He visits, or those whom He forsakes. The distinction betwixt these two classes of persons appears indeed to be what he particularly intended to mark by the double reference “whence it cometh,” “whither it goeth;” since the meaning of both its branches, as we have seen, is in other respects identical. The whole statement therefore amounts to this: That we do not know, and cannot discover the high views of justice, mercy, and holy expediency by which the Spirit of God is moved and guided in the dispensation of His benefits among mankind; and Christ, in fact, is calmly teaching here concerning the Holy Ghost, the same truth which Paul elsewhere proclaims with awe and wonder when reviewing the effects of His working on the destinies of men—“O! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom. xi. 33.)



It is not, however, without some restriction of its absolute universality that the Scripture teaches us this doctrine. Following still the illustration, although it is impossible for us to tell in what particular region of the heavens, or from what special cause, the soft gale which refreshes the earth at any given time may have begun its course; yet we may know somewhat of the general laws which regulate the atmospheric currents—we may perceive the direction in which they now flow down upon ourselves—and may observe certain local circumstances by which their present impressions upon us are variously modified. So it is in regard to the breathings of the Holy Ghost. To a certain extent the Scriptures have revealed to us his purposes and ways. God does all things for his own glory. Out of infinite love he saves the souls of his people. In these and the like respects, therefore, we are not ignorant what heavenly reasons moved the Holy Spirit to the choice, and actuate him in the exercise of his office. Nor are they the primary sources only of his working that are made known to us, but some laws of its ordinary procedure also. For instance his blessings are granted to earnest prayer. Your Heavenly Father, says our Lord, will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it—nay, every one that asketh receiveth. (Matt. vii. 8.) An increase of His benefits generally is annexed to watchfulness and diligence in the use of all religious means; hence the exhortation, “grow in grace.” (2 Peter iii. 18.) And in short, as regards those whom He hath once sealed unto the day of redemption, although they may often resist, although they may deeply grieve Him, yet will He not forsake them utterly; howsoever they may be chastened; “for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” (Rom. xi. 29.) But, on the other side, as regards the unregenerate, they may provoke him to depart—“My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” (Gen. vi. 3.) They may so offend as to debar them-

selves for ever from his aid, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again to repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." (Heb. vi. 4—6.) It is only in consistency with such declarations as these, and without the bounds which they describe, that the Lord pronounces the ways of the Spirit to be unsearchable. The great originating motives, the leading principles and rules of his administration, matters deeply affecting our comfort and our duty, are graciously revealed.

But beyond these limits all is impenetrable mystery. In vain we seek there an answer to questions the most solemn and awful when they are not practical. We are apt to say, for instance, the mercy of the Father is infinite; the value of the Son's blood is unbounded; the power of the Holy Ghost is all sufficient; why, then, is only a portion of mankind saved, while many—many perish? Why doth not this divine Paraclete regenerate them all? In reply to such queries, the Scripture solemnly confirms the fact as it stands, maintains the right of God to do what is good in his sight, but gives no explanation. "The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." (Prov. xvi. 4.) It may be that in the inherent imperfection of all created beings as such (for Godhead alone is *absolutely* perfect, and Godhead cannot be created) it may be that in *this* necessary imperfection there are essential characters and conditions which render it impossible in the nature of things to construct an intellectual world, into which evil, physical and moral, shall not enter. A creation of free responsible intelligences, none of whom shall ever transgress the law of their being, or become righteously subject to punishment, may, for aught we know, involve a contradiction in the very

terms which describe it:—and the demand that it should be realized, so natural to a race of sinners, may be a requirement of nothing less than that omnipotence should arise and war with itself in the vain attempt to constitute and combine in one system facts that mutually subvert and destroy one another. Or should there be no such *natural* impossibility, there may still be some *moral* obstruction equally insurmountable. A universe of spiritual beings, in which not only at its first formation (for such a universe exists), but throughout its eternal perpetuity, SIN should never be found; this, however specious to our limited apprehensions, might very possibly *not* be the world which it would best become a holy God to create. It is no absurd or incredible supposition to make, that such a fabric might involve, and necessarily too, some secret incongruity, some hidden wrong, toward either the Creator himself or some portion of His creatures—or toward both—a wrong of moment enough to make it quite apparent in the eyes of infinite wisdom, that not this, but another world, faultless in its origin, yet where sin might afterwards enter, and though denounced, be with much long-suffering endured, was, after all, the world which sovereign justice, equity, rectitude, required the Maker of all things to prefer. The doctrine of the Optimist, too, might be alleged. He tells us, and is well worthy of being listened to, that for anything we can see, a far greater amount of good, upon the whole, may result from the mixed state of things than from the unmixed—an outpouring immeasurably larger of the riches of heavenly love. It far transcends our capacities, indeed, to demonstrate that these things are so, equally incompetent are we to pronounce that they are not; but if they *may be*—then have we no solid ground whatever for denying that God, in decreeing to save only a portion of our race, while he passes by the rest, has acted in the manner most entirely worthy of divine perfection; and no ground, consequently, for questioning the absolute recti-

tude or goodness of the Paraclete in regenerating, not all mankind, but only a chosen people.

It results from these reflections, that to question the right of God to create or continue a race of beings liable to sin and actually sinning, might be in effect to call Him to account for creating a rational world at all. But if this must be acknowledged as intolerable presumption, then it remains the only reasonable, as it is the consoling persuasion, that, in the main, and at the last, the universe we behold, as it proves itself to be the practicable, is also the right, and just, and good one!—But sin once entered, mankind fallen, a section, and only a section of the human family to be saved—the question arises, which of them—who among them shall be thus highly privileged? In this again our blindness is ready to give a rash answer. Surely those, we say, who have least offended: they shall be preferred. Those who have gone farthest astray—they shall be left to their wanderings. “But my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” On this profound and overwhelming subject, the only truth, indeed, which it hath pleased the Spirit to reveal is the negative one that the rule of procedure in election which we would adopt is *not* the rule which the Father has followed, and upon which the Sanctifier acts. Regarding the lesser degree of sin in some, as a kind of righteousness, some may feel as if it should entitle them to the preference over others: but the Scripture pronounces, “There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. iii. 22—23.) And, therefore, “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy he saved us (Tit. iii. 5); by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”—God keeps distinct His character as a Judge from His character as a Saviour, which we would confound. In deter-

mining who of mankind shall be saved, as a Judge we approach Him; we ask that those who have least violated His law shall be chosen: and on such an occasion we deem it in point to say, Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Alas! we forget that by the very terms of our petition, those we plead for have violated the law; that a judge deciding in their case according to law can only condemn them; that, in this capacity, God measures their punishment by their offences, but can *save* no child of Adam; that, on this footing, there is no room for an election of grace at all. Therefore God rejects this as the principle of choice just because he would forgive sinners. Of necessity he lays aside the Judge, since he *WILL* be a Saviour. Ceasing to weigh the comparative demerits of those, the claim of whose least offender is, at the best, but to be beaten with fewer stripes,—to inhabit a less intolerable hell,—He assumes the position and the maxim of one who is determined to distribute the best of boons among a race of the worst undeservers; whose purpose it is not merely to pardon, to restore, and to bless a portion of them, but to signalize the riches of heavenly mercy and love, by making them inmates of His sanctuary, heirs of His kingdom, and joint-heirs with His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. Surely with intents like these to put in execution, it well beseems the Most High God to say, “I will do what I will with mine own” (Matth. xx. 15). “I will have mercy on whom I *will* have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I *will* have compassion” (Rom. ix. 15). Bestowing His sumless treasures upon those who are infinitely removed from all title or pretension to the slightest favours, is God unrighteous, who selects for himself the objects of His bounty? Would their power be better committed to chance? Would it be better vested in the hands of creatures or of sinners? Away with the blasphemy! Meet it is that He should thus be Sovereign in whom is combined with the clearest right an infallible wisdom

to direct its exercise, and a majesty of transcendent power that needs not stoop to be a respecter of persons. But if any man will presume to think otherwise, God will not for that reason abate or disguise His prerogative. "Why dost thou strive against Him," saith the Scripture; "for He giveth not account of any of His matters" (Job xxxiii. 13).

Since the Holy Spirit then acts freely according to the decree of election, not upon any consideration of our previous good or evil deeds, nor for any reasons known to us,—does it follow that no sufficient reason exists? Does He set apart the objects of his favour, without any firm ground of discrimination at all? When one is taken and another left, is the act purely arbitrary?—arbitrary in any sense verging upon blind will, or inconsiderate caprice, or despotic recklessness? That be far from God! With infinite cause, unquestionably, he disposes of every soul in every crisis of its history, whether it be a vessel unto honour or unto dishonour. The grain of sand that tosses on our coast, why is it here and not in the Indies? The drop of water now buried in the depths of the ocean, why is it not rather suspended in the clouds? The masses of soil and rock which form the mountains of our land, why do they make part of the terrestrial globe rather than of the sun, or of the planet that was first seen but as yesterday, or of some star whose travelling rays have not had time to reach us in six thousand years? It were the vainest of speculations for us to inquire: but *He* knoweth perfectly, and *HE* could tell it all, "who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." Now, if the disposition of inanimate things be matter of wise arrangement, while, in regard to sentient nature, there is not a sparrow that flies or falls but by his counsel, shall the present state and everlasting destinies of rational



and immortal spirits—better each of them than many sparrows—either be left unregulated, or be regulated amiss? Shall they not rather, in every instance, be determined by the conclusions of consummate reason, in the manner most accordant with God's absolute perfections, and the conditions of that world to which his perfections have given birth? Undoubtedly they shall. But we are not let into the secrets of this wisdom, only we know that it puts wholly out of the question all imagined worthiness of ours; "that no flesh may glory in his presence;" (1 Cor. i. 29)—and acts on grounds that justify the prophet's exhortation, "Ascribe ye greatness unto our God, He is the rock; His work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He." (Deut. xxxii. 3, 4.) Such are the characters of the Holy Spirit put forth in the dispensation of his gracious influences; although to us His views and motives are in the greater part mysterious—even as "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whether it goeth."

"Thou hearest the sound thereof." The efficacy of the operations of the Holy Ghost is very plainly held forth in this expression; but not without a reference equally distinct to the topic we are now discussing—their mysteriousness. An effect of the wind—the sound thereof, is perceived with certainty, but the motion itself by which it causes that sound is invisible, and escapes observation. It is even so with the regenerating work of the Spirit. Its effects are manifest, peculiar, and mighty, but its manner and method in producing them, is an impenetrable secret. Let us rightly understand this statement. The operations of the Spirit, having our intellectual and moral nature as their subject, act in strict accordance with it. Instruction, reproof, correction, training, are employed by him in accomplishing our sanctification. It might seem, therefore, that his procedure is not in all respects unsearchable, since of these and the like actings of moral sua-

sion, we not only have a clear apprehension, but profit by them the more, the better they are understood. The fact, however, is, that in strictness, these are not the movements of the Spirit's own power, but of the instrument with which He works. It is the Scripture which we look upon when thus affected, profitable as it is for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. The Divine energy which gives it effect is still unseen.

A less considerable misapprehension, but one, however, worth precluding, arises from our inward experience of his renovating power. Our judgment is rectified, our conscience is alarmed or pacified, our affections regulated, the very appetites and impulses of animal nature in us are disciplined and controlled. "To see this," one is apt to ask, "is it not to see the very hand of God the Spirit doing its work"? But, no; it is only to see the field over which his hand is stretched out, and to see the changes which his hand achieves, but not to see the hand itself.

It is, no doubt, valuable knowledge to apprehend what is the *seat* of his gracious influences; and of this I may speak shortly now, reserving their *results* for another occasion. "And the very God of peace," prays the Apostle Paul for the Thessalonians (v. 23), "Sanctify you wholly, and your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is plain, that no separate portion, however excellent, but the entire fabric of human nature, is presented to view in these words, as the proper subject of sanctification. The mere and real Spirit *πνευμα*, the home of all purely spiritual acts and affections, is first mentioned, indeed, as incomparably the most important, allying us with the angels of God, and assimilating us to God himself. But next, is specified the material soul, if one may speak so, *ψυχή*, the sensorium of animal life, instinct, appetite, through which they reach and

affect the Spirit. And last of all, is expressly named the clay framework itself—*σωμα* the wonderful construction of mechanical and physical organs, by which it pleased the Creator that the Spirit, its intellectual occupant, should hold converse with external things. In these three essential constituents of humanity, first viewed in their complex unity, the Paraclete moves His servant, to pray that God may sanctify the disciples wholly, *ἀγιασαι ὁλοτελεις*—and prompts him next, distributing their nature into its several portions, to pray for each apart and entire, *ολοκληρον* that it be “preserved blameless,” a phrase equivalent to sanctification—*ἀμεμπτως τηρηθειν*—until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. As to the object, then, on which the Holy Ghost puts forth his influences, the Scripture, we see, is quite explicit; every part and parcel of our being severally, as well as the whole in its syncrasy, requires and receives His aids. But what a striking proof does this very fact supply, that the *mode* of his operation is inscrutable. He sanctifies the body—that we should be ready to think, must imply some physical or mechanical application. He sanctifies the Spirit—that again we would fancy with reason must be by some spiritual virtue. He sanctifies the soul, that wonderful essence of earthly vitality, the highest element of brute natures, but secondary in man; by what epithet should we presume to qualify the influence that operates here? He is himself a pure Spirit; can any agency lower than spiritual—especially, can anything like material impetus or *vis inertiae* be conceived in him? Yet His doing tells on both body and soul. Nay, even, when he deals with the human spirit itself, since it is evidently not by moral suasion alone that he does so—for then all would be converted upon whom the truth were largely brought to bear—which is far from being the case—by what fine effluence, is it of Spirit on Spirit—by what ineffable communion is it of created with uncreated mind—that intellectual vision in the creature is purged—that

godly zeal and love are rekindled—that heavenly peace and gladness are restored? Can we answer any one of these questions? They are far above the scope of our faculties; no, “we cannot tell.” “Such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain unto it.” But since the energy, though concealed, is omnipotent—since the results, though unaccountable, bring a sure and everlasting salvation—it is fit that remembering the other mystery of the Spirit’s motives and counsel, along with this second mystery of His work, we say, with adoring gladness, as He has himself taught us to say, “Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens; thy faithfulness reacheth to the clouds; thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep. O Lord! thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is thy loving-kindness! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life; and in thy light shall we see light!” Amen.

## LECTURE VIII.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT REPROVES THE WORLD OF SIN.

WE have been for some time considering the truth that the Holy Spirit carries out the design of his Office and Mission in a two-fold manner—by *Means* and by *Influences*—the means consisting of the entire ministry of the Gospel—the whole office-bearers of the Church, with the word of Truth in their lips, whereby both to teach and rule—and the Influences being just the direct and immediate workings of the Spirit's own power upon the complex fabric of human nature—and bearing accordingly all the insignia of the Divinity of the Agent—invincible potency, unrestrained liberty, and impenetrable secrecy. But now we come to inquire into the effects of his operation among mankind; and in doing so it is manifestly expedient that we cease henceforward to dwell upon the means and influences as separate matters; but rather conceive of them as one harmonious agency directed to one object—recalling the distinction only where some speciality of detail renders attention to it necessary. There is, however, another distinction, formerly stated and explained, which may now assist us materially in portioning off into its main divisions the great subject we are approaching; I allude to the two-fold bearing of the Holy Spirit's office as Paraclete or advocate—the one as he pleads the cause of God among men—the other as he pleads the cause of man with God. The former of these functions, in a sense to be presently set

forth, he discharges toward mankind generally. The latter has place only in the hearts of the regenerate. It is therefore obvious which of the two should be first considered, since way must be made by the success of the former before there is room for the exercise of the latter.

I. Turning then to contemplate with reverence and desire the mighty working of the Holy Ghost as sent from heaven by the Son, now risen and ascended up on high—sent to vindicate the ways of God before an apostate race, and call them to repentance and everlasting life; let us follow, again, the guidance of Him who received this transcendent gift for men, in our endeavour to trace its excellency in its effects. None is so able as the Lord Himself to set before our eyes the entire agency of the Holy Ghost in this as in every other branch of His office, comprehensively and clearly, and in method. After telling His disciples, amid their so row and perplexity, “It is expedient for you that I go away, for, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but, if I depart, I will send him unto you,” what account does he add of the work which the Spirit should thereafter perform? “When He is come He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me: of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more: of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” (John xvi. 8.)

Three main things are taught us here regarding the Spirit’s advocacy. 1. Its field—the world. 2. Its design—to reprove. 3. Its subjects—sin, righteousness, judgment.

1. The field on which the Spirit acts, or rather the race to which He addresses Himself, is the world of mankind—the seed of Adam indiscriminately. In the first instance, sinners are before Him in the mass—the differences which subsequently arise, separating the believing from the disobedient, are all of His own producing. Our Lord’s declaration on this point



therefore corresponds exactly with His commission to the Apostles after they had received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost—"Go and teach all nations—preach the Gospel to every creature." Wherever that ministry extends, which is the means whereby the Spirit works, there His influences too have access; and we learn not only thus from the terms of their Mission itself, but also from its results, as set forth in the parable of the tares, that "the field" of both "is the world"—for thence are reaped at the harvest of judgment both the tares, which are the children of the wicked one, and the good seed, which represent the children of the kingdom, constituting together the whole family of man—the one to be cast into a furnace of fire, the others to shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. It is true the Divine purpose, in its application to mankind, considered as occupying territorially the entire face of the globe, has never yet been fully accomplished; but this has been through the neglect and unbelief of men themselves; and we are taught to wait in hope for the dawning ere long of a better day. So much for the field "pervaded by the Paraclete in his office."

II. And what, in the next place, is the design which he prosecutes there? "To reprove the world." So says our Lord, *ελεγξει τον κοσμον*. The verb in this phrase seems employed in the New Testament with three shades of meaning, according to as many different states of mind in the person addressed. If he be blameable, but thoughtless or unconscious, it means simply to let in the light upon his offence. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, *ελεγξον αυτον*, between him and thee alone"—(Matt. xviii. 15)—Again: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them," *ελεγχετε*—"all things that are reproved," *ελεγχομενα*, it is added a little after, "*are made manifest by the light*" (Eph. v. 11—13); and with these words of Paul accords the

saying of our Lord, "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reprov'd," ἐλεγχθῇ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. (John iii. 20.) This first meaning of the term is accurately enough expressed by the English word to "reprove."—The second meaning occurs where the party censured is in a frame to acknowledge and repair his error. Paul describes such a man under the influence of christian instruction. "If all prophesy," says he, "and there come in one that believeth not or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, ἐλεγχεται, he is judged of all, and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." Here again the corresponding English word, in the modern sense of it, is to convince. But, at the date of our authorized version, this word signified also what we now express by the term to convict:—that is to demonstrate and bring home the offence, howsoever the offender may deny and dispute the matter, and this is the third meaning of ἐλεγχω. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" says our Lord, challenging His adversaries: τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐλεγχεί με περὶ ἁμαρτίας. (John viii. 46.) Simple reproof cannot be intended here, for they accused Him abundantly, in that very conversation calling Him an impostor; but they failed in the proof—they could not "convict." Errors of opinion, as well as conduct, fall within the scope of such conviction. "There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers," says Paul to Titus (i. 9, 11, 13), "whose mouths must be stopped. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, ἐλεγχε ἀποτομῶς, (so as to cut off reply) that they may be sound in the faith."—If we gather up the results, then, of this short investigation, their sum appears to be this: that the work of the Holy Ghost in reprovng the world is so to let in the light of heavenly truth upon the souls of men that multitudes may receive it, and thus be humbled and repent, while as many as put it away from them may be convicted and put to silence.

III. But now, in the third place, what are the subjects upon which the Holy Spirit reproves, convinces, convicts the world? The first of them is sin. And wherein are they chargeable with it? "Because," says the Lord, "they believe not on me."

It is evident that the word "believe" must here be taken in its largest sense. It is equivalent to that other term by which faith is often expressed, "to receive"—for not receiving Christ, that is rejecting him, is plainly the offence of which the world was guilty: "He came to His own, and His own received Him not." (John i. 11.) Now Christ was the messenger of God to men. "The Eternal Word was made flesh and dwelt among us—the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person—the great, the only Mediator betwixt God and men." (Heb. i. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 5.) To receive Him, therefore, was to receive God; to reject Him was to reject God; and in that one act of rejection manifestly was contained the sum and spirit of all sin.

This, however, will be the more apparent if we attend a little to particulars.

1. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him." (John i. 18). We have no true knowledge, no spiritual apprehensions of God, otherwise than through the Lord Jesus; but in Him is presented to us by word and deed a perfect exhibition of the Divine attributes, to the utmost extent of our powers of perception, and with exact adaptation to their nature. "He that hath seen me" is His own most emphatic declaration to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father—(John xiv. 9)—and how sayest thou then, show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" In this capacity, then, for men to put the Lord Jesus away from them was just to put away all true knowledge of God at once, and to disown Him in His brightest manifestation. It was "to

make God a liar" under that very form of His testimony where the evidences of truth were most transcendent, nor could, in human eyes, be exceeded; where also they were accompanied by the most expressive and affecting tokens of His love. Turning from the light, it was to choose the darkness, and give up their souls to such wretched semblances of knowledge and wisdom in divine things, as the weakness of human reason might imagine, or the Spirit of falsehood, might in his malice suggest. It was to repeat the sin of ancient Israel, but in a form incomparably more offensive than was possible before the personal advent of the Lord in flesh; when they "said to the seers, see not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits, get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path. Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us!" (Is. xxx. 10).

2. A second aspect, however, of the sin of the world in rejecting Christ, is, if possible, yet more significant of desperate hostility and rebellion against God. Christ was the depositary of God's sovereignty and God's law among men. In the second Psalm, God calls him "My King," to signify that by Him, and Him only, while the present order of things lasts, He will rule His world. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hands. (John iii. 35.) "All power is given unto me," says that Son himself, "All power is given unto me, in heaven and on earth." (Matt. xxviii. 18.) Using His prerogative, He comes not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil. He proclaims the Divine commandment anew, cleared not only from the perverting glosses of the Scribe and Pharisee, but even from the carnal integuments of the Mosaic Covenant, and expanded in all the breadth, and purity, and power of its spiritual import and application. And He winds up His kingly promulgation by the announcement, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of MINE and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man

which built his house upon a rock." "And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand." (Matt. v. 1, to vii. 29.) "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son." (John v. 22.) Accordingly, we find it written, that of "the principalities and powers in heavenly places, does every knee bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. ii. 10, 11.) While among His servants on earth, Paul, the Apostle, in this respect an equal, and specimen of all the rest, speaks of himself as "being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ." (1 Cor. ix. 21.) The men, therefore, who rejected Christ, rejected in Him both the law of God and the authority that ordained it. Not content with thus ratifying the primeval apostacy of Adam, they opposed the work of Him who came to restore us to peace with God, and to the blessings of a willing and gladsome obedience; Himself for that end satisfying the law on our behalf, by virtue of a Divine righteousness, and of atoning agonies. Following their rejection, moreover, to its legitimate issues, they persecuted the King of Glory to the death; and leagued, though unconsciously, with the powers of darkness, actuated, assuredly, by the enmity of hell itself, they did all that the puny hatred of man's heart could do, to pluck down the holy commandment and legislative majesty of God from on high, and nail them, in the person of His beloved Son, to the accursed tree. Surely, in disclosing this, the Holy Ghost convinces the world of sin.

3. Once more, by not believing on Christ, the world not only refused God as their Instructor, and disowned Him as their King, but despised and renounced Him as the portion of their souls. In Christ, His unspeakable gift, (2 Cor. ix. 15), He presented to their acceptance the whole plenitude of His favours. Whether it were pardoning tenderness of mercy, or whether it were

regenerating grace and power; whether the holy guardianship and discipline of Providence on earth, or the blessedness of an everlasting inheritance in glory, "It pleased the Father that in Christ all fulness should dwell." (Col. i. 19.) It was in His beloved Son that He predestinated us unto the adoption of children. It was as joint-heirs with Christ that He said unto us, "All things are yours, (Eph. i. 5; 1 Cor. iii. 21.) whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours." It is by Christ, and by Him only, that we come unto the Father, and behold His glory. They are the words of Christ which we adopt, in partaking his joy, when we say, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot; the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, I have a goodly heritage." (Ps. xvi. 5.) To reject Christ, therefore, what was it else, but to thrust the proffered riches of God himself and of His goodness away from them, in the blind expectation of finding otherwise a more desirable and more satisfying possession? Comprehending, then, under one view, these three aspects, the chief, perhaps, though not the only ones, of the sin of unbelief, what greater outrage can be conceived against the wisdom of the Omniscient, the sovereignty of the Almighty, and the love of the all-merciful, all-bountiful Lord God, than that which was actually perpetrated in the denial and crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ? And what a mighty range of profound and solemn truth is comprehended under this first particular so briefly described, of the Holy Spirit's work, "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on me."

While this great iniquity is in some sense, either express or implied, chargeable upon all mankind, the degrees in which it attaches to different portions of the race, are shaded off indefinitely according to their circumstances.



At the one extremity of the scale are the men who were in immediate contact with our Saviour's ministry—who beheld His person, heard His doctrine, witnessed His miracles, and then condemned Him, executed Him, disguised the unwelcome event of His resurrection with falsehood, and pursued both the depositaries of His Gospel and their followers, with implacable bitterness and cruelty. Hear how he himself has stated the charge. "If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me they will also persecute you, if they have kept my saying (*ετηρησαν*, watched my words), they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not Him that sent me. If I had not *come and spoken unto them*, they had not had sin, (such aggravated sin;) but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father." Along with these chiefest of adversaries, we may class such hardened unbelievers of the earlier age, both Jews and Gentiles, as amid the full blaze of knowledge and of evidence, strove to extinguish the truth in the blood of its martyrs.

At the other extremity of the scale are the dark heathen who have never heard, nor had opportunity of hearing, the name of a Saviour. The sin of unbelief in that explicit sense of the accusation which does not reach them, is nevertheless on their account chargeable against others. Their forefathers did not like to retain God in their knowledge, according to those early revelations of Him which the race at large enjoyed (Rom. i. 28);

but left their children to sink into the grossest ignorance and its consequent unconcern. Worse than they, the possessors of *ē*vangelic truth and privilege have to a grievous extent neglected their Master's truth, and failed to enlighten the earth by His Word. Still the heathen are by implication open to the charge. They too are animated by the Spirit, and bring forth all the fruits of unbelief. "They change the truth of God into a lie, and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator." (Rom. i. 25.) They disobey, they stifle the voice of God's law, speaking by their consciences. They are content to live without God or spiritual hope, and they seek their portion in this world. They plainly show that if they have not, like others, actually rejected the Lord, it is merely because He has not been actually in their offer. And with them may be associated, though in a somewhat different grade, such tribes or individuals dwelling in Christian lands, as without fault of their own, by some unhappy combination of circumstances, have not had opportunity to hear or learn the Gospel.

Between these two extremes, as you have not failed to perceive, are we ourselves, and such as we, to be set down. We have the doctrine of life fully recorded in Scripture, and constantly ministered in ordinances. Our evidences are less obvious and striking than at the beginning; but still most ample, most convincing to all who impartially consider them, and reaching in some valid shape and to some good and sufficient extent, the general mass of our people. How then is the Lord received amongst us? What is the amount of unbelief in this our Christendom? and what of perversion equivalent to unbelief? The answer is much too wide and too varied for present exposition. But solemn is the bearing on all professing Christians of that testing maxim, "by their fruits ye shall know them." And for ourselves, individually, alas! is the knowledge, the law, the love of God in Christ, so dear to any of us as they should be?

How many symptoms of unbelief, in reference to these points, do, in the eye of even our own consciences, beset and disfigure our very faith! And how seriously does it become us to consider the application of that saying to ourselves, "When He," the Holy Spirit, "cometh, He will reprove the world, the whole world, of sin, because they believe not on me." Amen.

## LECTURE IX.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT REPROVES THE WORLD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

#### CHRIST'S—THE FATHER'S.

“WHEN He is come He will reprove the world of righteousness—because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.” This is the second subject of the Holy Spirit’s advocacy for God among men—RIGHTEOUSNESS. It is a subject concerning which the world is full of ignorance, erroneous judgments, and sinful oppositions; such as need to have the light let in upon them for the conviction of men, that the obedient may be saved; and that as regards the unhappy remainder, the blame of their downfall may rest where it is due, that is, not upon God, but upon themselves. By what means then does the Paraclete thus reprove, convince, convict the world? How is it that the righteousness of which He speaks becomes a fact so manifest and so conclusively certain? “Because,” says the Lord, “I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.”

The change to be wrought in our Saviour’s condition, was to prove the unanswerable demonstration. He had dwelt on earth, sinless, yet in the likeness of sinful flesh—the child of many labours and necessities, a mark for the arrows of slander and persecution, “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” Soon He was to die a death of ignominy and anguish, as if justly condemned by the laws of God and of men. He was to be buried, and to lie in the grave itself, under seal and ward,

as if mischief were to be dreaded from His very corpse. But from this point the scene was to change. He was to rise from the dead on the third day—the first step of His going to His Father. He was to converse with His disciples, not after His former manner, but occasionally and mysteriously for a short time, that they might be fully taught and commissioned, and fully assured of His actual resurrection—His body another yet the same. He was then to ascend the heavens before their eyes—visibly to enter the cloud of glory, the chariot of Omnipotence from the days of old. Arriving at the celestial paradise where-soever that region spreads, and presenting himself before its portals—“Lift up your heads, O ye gates,” was then the song of saints and angels before Him, even “lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory! (Psa. xxiv. 9, 10.) And what is his place here among principalities and powers? By a voice from the celestial throne the Highest himself answers the question; “Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” (Ps. cx. 1).

Making these things amply known among men, by the testimony of competent witnesses—confirming their words by signs and wonders following, the sequel of Christ’s own unnumbered miracles—*thus* it was that the Paraclete *reproved the world of righteousness*. But what righteousness? Of whom was the righteousness in this manner evinced?

I. Of Christ himself, it is evident, first of all. His resurrection and ascension to the throne of God, proved that *He* was righteous.

1. On earth He had made very solemn and very exalted pretensions. He had declared himself the Christ, foretold by the prophets. He had announced himself the Son of the living God. (Matt. xvi. 16). As formerly in the presence of angels, so now among men, “He had thought it not robbery to be equal

with God." (Phil. ii. 6). He had said openly in that sense, "I and my Father are one," (John x. 30); and again, to the same purpose, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (John v. 17). "I adjure thee," said God's high priest, as Jesus stood before him on His trial, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." It was the legal form of prescribing the oath in judgment; and under its sanction Jesus replied, (Matt. xxvi. 64), "Thou hast said; nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." And for this He was condemned. Those who sat in Moses' seat, administering as they affirmed the law of God, and enforcing its righteous penalties, passed sentence upon Him, "The High Priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy. What need have we of further witnesses? Behold ye have heard the blasphemy; what think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in His face and buffeted Him; and others smote Him with their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" What sentence could be more just, or what severities more merited, if His assumptions had really been false? If being but a creature, He had arrogated to himself the honours of Godhead—and if, while conscious of His mortality as a mere man, and of His great sin as a wicked impostor, He had, like Simon Magus, or like Mahomet, persuaded men to lean for their soul's salvation on such a broken reed?—This was the crime with which His enemies thought to blacken Him; but from this He was vindicated, by going to His Father; and we see Him no more in a state of humiliation and sorrow. It was the most unequivocal pledge, the most triumphant demonstration before the world, of His native title to all the majesty which He assumed, that the Father should call Him from the grave to the throne of His universe, no more to visit earth until He should



come in glory to judge men and angels, the living and the dead. Nor is His exaltation left without divine evidence in the mean time. The Spirit descends at Pentecost; and moves the apostles so powerfully to press this argument, that thousands on the spot are convinced by it of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel, and foreknowledge of God," said Peter, "ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it;" and here He quotes the prophet David. (Acts ii. 23.) "This Jesus, he repeats, (ver. 32), hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost—that is, the Holy Ghost as promised—He hath shed forth *this* which ye *now see and hear*. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

2. It was not only the righteousness of Jesus as impeached among men, which His resurrection thus evinced. It gave witness of his acceptance at a far higher tribunal. It set the seal of heavenly approbation upon His faithfulness, in the covenant of redemption—His perfect equity and sufficiency in fulfilling all its mediatorial provisions, so far as they belonged to His state of humiliation. When the Blessed God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of Mercies (2 Cor. i. 3) had purposed, in a way of righteousness, to save sinners of the race of Adam; and, according to that counsel of His own will, whereby with infinite reason He holily fore-ordaineth all things, had elected to salvation what numbers, and what names, of men it seemed good in his sight (Eph. i. 3, 4, 5, &c., to 12); as it was in the Son that He had chosen them, so into the hands of the Son He committed them, and gave Him power over all

flesh, that He should give eternal life, says the Lord himself, "to as many as Thou hast given him." (John xvii. 2). What then did the Son undertake on their behalf? In the eye of Divine prescience, they were already fallen in Adam. They had broken their covenant of life with God, and Christ became their surety under a new and better covenant. (Heb. vii. 22.) The law of their creation, which they had violated, being holy, just, and good (Rom. vii. 12), still required of them a true and full obedience, since it could nowise be repealed by their trespass. Its righteous sanction, which would have been eternal life, if they had continued upright, was turned into death by their apostacy. Under that double claim they lay, of obedience due, and of death deserved. In both its branches that claim must be satisfied ere the truth, and righteousness, and authority of the Law-giver can be vindicated in restoring the guilty to His favour. Therefore the Eternal Word (John i. 1), the essential wisdom of God (Prov. viii. 1—23—31), concerning whom it is testified, that He was from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, and that from the creation he rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men,—He, by the Father's will, constituted himself their substitute, and made himself responsible in their stead for all that law and justice could demand. Nor must we imagine, in such a case, that their requirements were not to be strictly reckoned. A sinful judge may make allowance for his fellow-sinners. Subordinate justice may let slip some portion of her prerogative, even of her rectitude, and the world keep its course notwithstanding. But if the judgment-seat of ultimate authority,—if the tribunal of last appeal in the moral universe could swerve but by an hair's-breadth from the rule of exact and absolute impartiality—if the sanctity of Godhead could surrender but the minutest atom of superlative right and equity—not only would the foundations of holiness in all inferior natures then be fatally

shaken, but the glory of the Highest himself be obscured ; and that end and object of all desire, *perfection*—perfection of holiness, joy, and safety, would have neither name nor place any more in the whole world of created or uncreated things. That must not be ; and therefore must the Son of God, in discharge of His suretiship, cancel the doom that overwhelms His people, by not a seeming partial, but by a real and complete satisfaction. He must magnify the law and make it honourable, by an *obedience* in kind the same, in value at least equivalent to that in which they all had failed ;—and by a *death* of the very same nature, and adequate to at least the same ends, not merely of the world's government, but of the truth, the purity, and the glory of God himself. But pure Godhead cannot render man's obedience, still less die man's death. He will therefore stoop from His throne. He will put on flesh and blood. He will stand as the Covenant-head of His people—a second Adam. (1 Cor. xv. 22, 45). Without partaking of their sin, he will go down to the profoundest depths of their sorrows and earthly temptations. He will subject himself to the worst violence of wicked men. He will expose himself to all the subtilty, and rage, and cruelty of hell, that He may conquer it by endurance. Though holy, yet the Representative of sinners, and consciously stained with all their guiltiness in the presence of God and of His holy angels, (Ps. xl. 11, 15), He will lay bare His whole mortal being to the onset of penal justice from on high ; and in all the vitalities of His created frame, in the inmost sensibilities of His pure and gracious spirit, will receive the terrible utterance and execution of His Father's wrath, as roused to vengeance against the workers of iniquity. In that crisis of His own and His kingdom's honour, when retribution, if not *absolutely* righteous, must throw open the flood-gates of wickedness and interminable ruin, God would not spare " His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." (Rom. viii. 32.) Not to save appearances, but in

sincerity and in truth, "The Lord would lay upon Him our iniquity." (Is. liii. 6.) "He would make *Him* to be sin for us, who knew no sin." (2 Cor. v. 21). "It would please the Lord to bruise Him; He would put Him to grief; he would make His soul a sacrifice for sin." (Is. liii. 10.) And so suffering under the Father's hand, the Son would give His life a ransom for many. "He would redeem us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. iii. 13.) "He would suffer for sins once, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God." (1 Pet. iii. 18.) These were His engagements as Mediator. Did He satisfy them all? In His birth and in His death, and in the lifelong toil and temptation that lay between,—did He fulfil all righteousness? Was He, as became His office, "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." (Matth. iii. 15; Heb. vii. 26.) Did He teach as well as practise all the will of God? Did the Good Shepherd preserve the sheep for whom He laid down His life? Singular and alone, as He stood, in the universe of God, as regards the constitution of His person, did the union of the Godhead with His humanity, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, not only preserve the fabric of His nature unbroken, and the purity of His holiness untainted through such fiery tribulations; but also communicate such worth, such dignity, such virtue to His obedience unto death, as should render it a real and valid atonement for both the primal revolt and subsequent outrages of men. (Heb. ix. 13, 14.) These are questions evidently not for any creature to answer. None was competent to determine them but the Supreme Judge Himself.—And what was His decision? Once and again He bore witness from heaven, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" but that was at the beginning, or only in the progress of our Lord's ministry. On the Cross, then, He who just before had forsaken him, returned and made

Him exceeding glad with the light of His countenance, so that He exclaimed, "It is finished. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!" Yet, after this, He yielded up the ghost—was wrapped in a winding-sheet, and lay down in the grave.—But the raising Him from the dead, with all that followed, was conclusive testimony that redemption was indeed accomplished, that the blood of the Son of God was verily able to cleanse His people from all sin. When it was given Him who had borne the guilt of all sin thus to trample upon all the penalty of sin, what doubt could remain any longer, that He had finished transgression and made an end of sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. Nay, when rising from the tomb and ascending up on high, not only did His Godhead resume its original seat of glory, but exalt to that very place of dignity and power His earth-born humanity,—in the hand of Omnipotence, the instrument of His marvellous victory,—what proof more signal was it possible to furnish that the merits of His humiliation were, not faultless or sufficient merely, but immeasurably precious, worthy to be rewarded with all the powers and honours of celestial royalty itself? And that so rewarded it is, the Scripture declares, explicitly, "Because, being in the form of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, He made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. *Wherefore* God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Recording these things, surely the Paraclete has convinced the world of our Saviour's righteousness—His righteousness in His

mediatorial character. But thus is demonstrated not His righteousness only. More belongs to the subject; to which, if it please God, we shall return, at next opportunity.

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NOTE.—It is to be regretted that nothing but the following sketch remains of the subject which was to be handled under the title of the Holy Spirit's reproving the world of "The Father's Righteousness." Dr. M'LAGAN, apparently, had filled up the sketch in delivering the lecture. The train of thought, and nothing more, is indicated in the following brief particulars.

II. The righteousness of the Father is, first, *vindicated* in the Resurrection of Christ: Appearing, first, in the reward thus bestowed, and through this, appearing next in the original appointment of the Lord to the humiliation and sufferings of the Mediatorship. The general principle may be stated as follows:—"Christ was made under the law." (Gal. iv. 4.) The appointment of the law was, on the one hand, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." (Ezek. xviii. 4.) On the other hand, the terms ran, "The man that doeth them shall live by them." (Gal. iii. 12.) Then the rule of Scripture is, "He that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." (2 Cor. ix. 6.)

But more particularly,—

1. A very exalted Being was to be deeply humbled—therefore it was righteous proportionally to exalt Him again. There was need of choice in selecting a Redeemer. (Is. xlii. 1), "My servant whom I uphold, mine *elect*," &c. (Ps. lxxxix. 19), "I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one *chosen* out of the people." And why was Christ thus chosen? "This is my beloved Son," &c. (Mat. iii. 17.) Then as to the exaltation, after the previous humiliation, we read, "I have glorified thee on earth, glorify thou me," &c. (John xvii. 4, 5.) "Who being the brightness of His Father's glory, when He



had by himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high ; being made so much better than the angels," &c. (Heb. i. 3, 4.)

2. A very mighty Being stooped to *weakness*. (2 Cor. xiii. 4.) "Though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God—the weakness of God stronger than men." (1 Cor. i. 25.) Christ had to endure a sore conflict. "In the days of His flesh," &c. (Heb. v. 7.) Then there was a corresponding reward in *power* and *strength*. (Eph. i. 19, to the end of the chap.) Also, "Ye are complete in Him, who is the head of all principalities and power." (Col. ii. 10.) And "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him." (1 Peter iii. 22.)

3. A most blessed Being stooped to trouble unequalled. "His visage marred." (Is. lii. 13, 14.) And the reward corresponds, in "His being anointed with the oil of gladness," &c. (Ps. xlv. 6, 7, 8.) And in His obtaining "The joy set before Him." (Heb. xii. 2.)

§ Secondly, The Righteousness of the Father is *manifested* in appointing the Son to be Mediator—Because,

1. He was willing.
2. He was able.
3. He was *capable* of full reward.

## LECTURE X.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT REPROVES THE WORLD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

#### GOD'S IN JUSTIFYING SINNERS.

“HE shall reprove the world of righteousness.” To be fully seen this truth must be contemplated in three points of view : First, as the exaltation of Christ demonstrates his own righteousness in regard both to the claims which he made, and to the redemption which he wrought on earth : Secondly, as the same great event displays the righteousness of the Father not only in the suitableness and richness of the rewards with which He crowned the Son's obedience, but also in the primary arrangement itself by which he imposed upon Him so vast a responsibility. Had he been unwilling to assume it—had He been unable to bear it—had He been unsusceptible of an adequate reward—to exact of Him that suretiship might indeed have been accounted a wrong ; but inheriting, as he does, in glory, the very recompence which his heart longed for, because he victoriously accomplished what he voluntarily undertook, his honours now put to shame all such imputations of unrighteousness.

III. And now, in the third place, the fact that “our Lord is gone to the Father, and we see Him no more,” vindicates the righteousness of God in forgiving sin—proves that He “is just in justifying him that believeth in Jesus.”

An opportunity will occur hereafter, if it please God, of explaining more at large what is the Scripture meaning of

the word to justify. For the present it is enough to remark that the Greek verb, so translated, *δικαίω*, is continually used by the sacred writers in a forensic sense, to signify the acquittal of one accused in judgment, whether at the bar of God or men. Even of God himself, considered as in some sense capable of having his ways canvassed and decided on by human opinion, we find it written (Luke vii. 29), "That all the people and the publicans *justified* God, being baptized with the baptism of John, but the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." Sinners, then, when tried in the presence of Divine justice and found and declared faultless, are in Scripture language justified. It is not, however, in virtue of their own obedience to the law under which they were originally placed, and must in one respect for ever continue, that an approving sentence can pass upon them. The fact and the reason of this are alike palpable—"By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin": (Rom. iii. 20)—it is the very statute which condemns them. But we read of another righteousness than their own, "a righteousness of God" (ver. 21), which God imputeth to them, without works (Rom. iv. 6), which is, by the faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe. This can be no other than the righteousness of Christ, a Divine person, "who was manifested," as John expresses it, "to take away our sins, and in him is no sin." The general nature of His righteousness we need not again dilate upon. "Made of a woman, made under the law," he perfectly fulfilled the requirements of the law in doing and in suffering. His obedience bestowed in free gift upon his believing followers, is of dignity and merit sufficient to cancel all their guiltiness, and make it a righteous thing in God to hold them blameless and perfect at His tribunal. This vicarious righteousness Christ was sent of the Father to achieve; His death was just the

consummation of it, and therefore his ceasing to be held of death was as well the natural effect, as the public evidence of his having *finished* the work. Thus we see *there is* a righteousness through the gracious imputation of which, “to sinners God can be both a just God and a Saviour” (Is. xlv. 21), and “of this righteousness also the Paraclete reproveth the world, “because Christ is gone to the Father and we see Him no more.”

Let it then be our present business to search out, if possible, such views of this righteousness as may satisfy not only our *faith*, to which the testimony of God is abundantly sufficient, but our *understandings* also, that of its own proper nature and characters, it is a just ground, a valid reason, for pardoning and accepting sinners. Three main questions belong to the inquiry.

1. Is it suitable? 2. Is it available? 3. Is it sufficient?

I. Is it suitable? The holy work of Christ considering Him a subject of that law which man had broken—is it obedience of such a kind, that, when imputed to a sinful man, it presents a medium through which God may justly be reconciled to him, and may, without the least unrighteousness, restore him again to all the blessings of His love? Does it possess a native fitness for answering such a purpose? Is it a means worthy of God to devise and to employ when such is the end in view? There is no more natural way of answering the question than by viewing this righteousness successively in its bearings upon the various parties concerned in the great transaction of man's recovery, and the main results which it contemplates—and thus seeing whether or not it meets the exigencies of the case.

1. Man, first, was made for the glory of his Maker. To reflect the image of God's perfections in that specific aspect and colour under which his nature was fitted to apprehend and to exhibit them, was the ultimate use of his created goodness. Had he stood in his original rectitude and beauty, his moral and Spiritual being, placed in harmony and yet in contrast with

angels, and perhaps with ten thousand other races of Holy creatures, would have displayed its own peculiar type of the Divine purity and goodness ever admirable from what side soever they are viewed, and still the more astonishing, the more variously their glories shine abroad. But as he fell, the retributive justice of God, His holy severity, His hatred of all iniquity might have in man their peculiar manifestation. The evil nature and fatal consequence of all departures *wheresoever* practised, from that eternal standard of the right and good which is realized in the Divine character and ways, might present one most impressive example, and supply one very awful warning in that specific phase of woe and sorrow and destruction under which the sin of Man should receive its appropriate punishment. That such disclosures were actually intended to be made by interweaving with our condition the alternative of holiness and joy, or sin and death, who that understands and believes the Scriptures can question? But if so, then the obedience and the Cross of Christ answer the precise purposes of man's original creation. His is a man's holiness, His is a human sorrow. Endowed with all the faculties, intellectual, moral, or physical of *our* nature, not only were His conceptions of God and of duty the same with ours, but the goings forth of His spiritual and practical powers—His faith and truth towards God and men; His submission to Heaven and sympathy with humanity; His love, His zeal, His devotedness, His exertion, His patience, were all of them the graces of a child of Adam, compassed about by man's circumstances, dwelling in his world! When tortured by men, assaulted by demons, forsaken of God, and finally enduring the wrath deserved by our sins, He hung between heaven and earth, nailed to the accursed tree;—the grievous pains of His body, the languors of His expiring life, the darkness, the horror and the agony of His mighty soul were just the very death-pangs and unutterable tribulations of a hu-

man being, found out of his sins, and fallen into the hands of the living God. "The sorrows of death compassed me, the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow." In short, whether we look at the holiness of His life on the one side, or at the tenor of His death on the other—was there ever a creature woman-born in whom either the sublimities of *our* obedience, or the profoundest depths of our affliction could be so strikingly exhibited as in this first of human spirits, the supplier of our innumerable shortcomings, the expiator of immeasurable offences, who now worthily occupies the throne at which angels do homage? There is in His holiness an excellence which none other of our race could have approached. There is in His death a penal rigour which no man but Himself could have endured. If excellence in every kind is more fully exhibited by one example of superlative perfection, than by the multiplication of inferior instances to whatever extent, then are the beauties of holiness and the fearfulness of death as competent to our nature, more evidently set forth in the person of our Lord, than they could have been by the continued faithfulness or the righteous doom of all the species besides. It imports not a little, too, on what scene of His intellectual universe the marvellous works of God are displayed: and how different the revelations both of His goodness and severity, which shall beam forth from the Lamb slain, as evermore enthroned in heaven, and filling all worlds with His glory, than, under any circumstances of mankind as heirs whether of life or of death, could have emanated from the habitations of this cloudy and benighted spot!

As regards the human race, then, the uses of their nature, the great ends of their being, are not defeated in the vicarious righteousness of Christ, but gloriously heightened and secured. In this respect it is *suitable*.

2. It is suitable also, secondly, as regards the relations of Godhead to man; and that with a special reference to the rela-



tions of the Divine Persons among themselves. If God, out of grace and mercy infinite, is to save a people from among the fallen, who so fit to be the Captain of Salvation, and bring many sons into glory (Heb. ii. 10), as the only begotten Son himself, the first-born of every creature (Col. i. 15), the head (*αρχη*) of the creation of God (Rev. iii. 14). If such by nature be His position, how fit and how accordant is His official headship! how suitable the obedience, which in discharge of His office, He rendered! how accommodated to the circumstances and wants of the men, in whose behalf—Himself become a man—He wrought and suffered! It was meet that from the Father the sovereign law should issue. “This commandment,” the Saviour says accordingly (John x. 18), “I have received from my Father.” It was meet that the Son should render all filial zeal and obedience, and accordingly He says again, speaking still of His vicarious righteousness (Psalm xl. 8), “I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.” It was meet that the Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, should take His native share in this work of holy love. He therefore pours out the whole fulness of His gifts and graces, unmeasured, on the human nature of Christ, that His obedience may lack no character of spiritual beauty, greatness, and perfection. From the very bosom of Godhead this righteousness comes forth. It springs from the essential mysteries of the Divine personality. It comes down to earth, and is acted there, the very righteousness of men—as kindred to their nature as the grape to the vine, or the fig to the fig-tree—and yet alike in harmony with the highest heavens whence it proceeded, and whither it returns. In this field of the Divine operation, everything is most wonderful; but nothing is unnatural, nothing is out of joint, nothing jars. The Lord’s work of glorious submission and servitude comes in as fitly among the arrangements of Providence, and

bears as suitably upon the relative positions of God and men in the plan of redemption, as the harvest takes its place in the circuit of the seasons, to interpose between man and his necessities, and move him to thankfulness, by pouring into his bosom the whole riches of the year.

3. In one respect more, the suitableness of Christ's righteousness to justify is conspicuous—it harmonizes perfectly with the law. For the greater part this is only just repeating in another shape what has been already stated. The law is nothing else but that authoritative declaration of the will of God, by conforming to which man is to give him glory and to receive life. Now the truth we have been examining, is that our Lord's obedience is just such a conformity, and leads to such results. There are, however, beyond this first obvious view of the matter, one or two points of a peculiar and transcendent nature, in which the suitableness we speak of is manifest and very important,—with some short explanation of which the rest of our present lecture may be occupied.

1. The righteousness of Christ is suitable to the law in being *Vicarious*. It accords with the statute, as being the righteousness of a Surety. This, at first sight, may seem a paradox. The law requires of every one of its subjects a personal and perfect obedience ; wherein then, we are ready to say, lies the aptitude of substitution ? An answer to the question is found partly in the fact, that this very same law admitted of a vicarious and imputed righteousness from its earliest promulgation under the Adamic covenant. Then the head of our race held a high station as representative of his offspring ; and that the benefit of his single uprightness, if he had stood faithful, would have been made good to all, receives a certain though most melancholy proof, in the imputation to all of his guiltiness, as he is fallen. The office, therefore, of the Lord our righteousness, in its reference to the law, is not an expedient foreign to the

original principles of law, and resorted to, as by an unforeseen necessity, when a new emergency had arisen ; it is a legitimate provision, congruous to the primary rules of rectitude, and meetly built upon the old foundations. Nor can the admission of such a higher responsibility be justly considered as relaxing the bonds of ordinary subjection. It is not a motive to holiness withdrawn, but a security superadded. The universal obedience of his posterity, if Adam had stood, would not have been the less certain, but the more ; as they would thus have been compassed with higher defences, and favoured with richer aids. And even so the righteousness of the Second Adam, imputed for the justification of the ungodly, so far from encouraging their continued rebellion, restores them to a position where obedience becomes joyful, because it has hope, and advances by degrees to a state of perfect beauty and perpetual stability. There is harmony, therefore, in this first view, between Christ's vicarious righteousness and the law.

2. A second instance of conformity is not inferior to this in interest or in importance. What the law of God requires is human obedience, and that obedience perfect. This it never could have received otherwise than by substitution. Man once fallen, his covenant broken, his nature corrupted and alienated, it was, thenceforth, impossible he should satisfy the commandment perfectly. The opportunity was gone by for ever ; the offence was already and irrevocably committed. Supposing that many should return to their allegiance, there were none to do so but men who had previously transgressed, and so much as one instance of pure human conformity to the law could never have existed. In that respect, its end, and honour, and prerogative were frustrated for ever. But the righteousness of the Man Jesus comes in gloriously to avert this deep defeat and degrading reproach from the Sovereignty of heaven. Punishment, it is true, might have avenged, but could not have repaired the evil ;

for punishment is not obedience, in any, at least, who bear it with all enmity and reluctance, as ruined souls of men must inevitably have done. But Christ, too, bore the punishment. He took it willingly. He approved it. He gave heart-felt praise to the law which pronounced the doom upon Him. He opened His heart to the hand that smote Him. He loved it. He leaned upon it. O, marvellous device of the wisdom of God, to magnify and make honourable His law! When all its objects seemed to have misgiven—its obedience cut off—its blessings nullified—its very curse dishonoured in the endurance,—then God, sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and a sacrifice for sin, made its fulfilments glorious, its very rigours venerable, and its promised rewards celestial and Divine.

## LECTURE XI.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT REPROVES THE WORLD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

#### GOD'S IN JUSTIFYING SINNERS.

“THOU art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.” This Hallelujah of the heavenly inhabitants (Rev. iv. 11), as heard by the Apostle John in the Apocalypse, proclaims two of the sublimest truths made known even by the Scriptures:—That by the wise and free exercise of the Divine will, all things were both at first created and continue to exist—and, that as the highest end of all creation is his glory, so honour and power must be his in order to the attainment of that end—honour through which his subjects may joyfully serve him; and power, through which his enemies may be vanquished and kept in subjection. But it is evidently not by any conduct or condition of his creatures, that the *inherent* glory of God, the consummate perfection and blessedness of his nature can be affected. That stands complete in itself, too absolute for improvement, incapable of diminution, immutable, eternal. It is only his declarative glory—that in which His attributes are made known by being exercised *ad extra*, that can be subserved by his works. On all of these He hath stamped the impress of His Godhead, and to the intellectual part He hath granted the capacity to contemplate and adore. But while it is ultimately His own glory which He thus seeks, there is nothing in the aim at all allied to the selfishness of man's love of celebrity and

display. To apprehend and feel the excellency of God,—this is the very blessedness of His spiritual creation, their life, their health, their portion, while they cleave to Him; and if there is delight to Himself, which there is immeasurably in such diffusion of his praises, attended with such happy effects, it is the delight of pure and mere love, the peculiar joy of God, ever giving, never to receive, but of his own. Doubtless, as the world of spirits was constituted at first, this heavenly fellowship in the Divine glory was the universal privilege. But when, by the infirmity of a created nature making way for boundless wishes and presumptuous deeds, the angels fell; and when, after man's creation, he was seduced by the craft of a subtler intelligence, to the destruction of an entire race of God's children, then the relation in which God originally stood to His rational universe as a whole was materially changed! New thoughts of his nature and government, of necessity, entered into the minds not of the fallen only but of the upright—"Whence this irruption of evil into the empire of the all-wise and Almighty? Is it that the Lord intentionally drops the reins of sovereignty out of his hands? or that now he begins to look with indifference upon the corruption and ruin of his offspring? Henceforth is every soul to walk severally in his own way, the bond of holy dominion being loosed? Is each to pine and faint in his wanderings, because the fountain of primeval love is dried up?" Better hopes no doubt would retain their hold upon the angels that fell not. Still some high demonstration was needed that the reign of God was unshaken and his heart unchanged. Some new manifestation of Divine Majesty was requisite that the host of heaven might continue as formerly to shout with full triumph on the one side, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom;" and some fresh effusion of Divine loving-kindness, that they might answer with like joy on the other, "The mercy of the Lord is



from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness endureth for ever to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them." (Ps. xlv. 6—ciii. 17.)

It is true, the exigencies of a first apostacy had been met. Love dwelt with the faithful angels, justice pursued the rebellious. But for reasons probably beyond the compass of all created understanding, evil had been permitted to communicate itself from species to species, and to spread itself from world to world. Hence the call—not left an instant unsatisfied—for further proof, in addition to what had hitherto sufficed, that still the foundation of God stood sure as before. What better field, then, for exhibiting such demonstration, than that which presented itself in the condition and destinies of the newly fallen—less guilty than the first transgressors in this at least, that their sin was not self-originated, but the work of super-human malice, far more watchfully set for invasion than they for defence. Here, therefore, the King of Glory took His stand, to make good in the sight of heaven and earth at once the stability of His throne in righteousness, and the inexhaustible riches of His tender mercies and His loving kindnesses. But who shall satisfy royal justice if the rebels are to be forgiven? Who shall rescue the rebels if righteous vengeance is to be executed? "A task impossible!" might the heavens exclaim; yet it may be accomplished, if the wisdom of God devise the way, and if the power of God undertake the work. But while the Father, as it must be, is still seated on His tribunal as Sovereign and Judge, is there any besides in whom such divine qualifications meet? "Behold I come," saith one, "I that speak in righteousness mighty to save"—"*Christ* the power of God and the wisdom of God!"—(Ps. xl. 7; Isaiah lxiii. 1; 1 Cor. i. 24.)

That this glorious person, the Eternal Word, the only begotten Son, is personally all-sufficient for any work which it

pleaseth Him to assume, who can doubt that believes the consenting voice of many Scriptures, testifying together that no less really than the Father, ‘He is over all, God blessed for ever.’ His Godhead is in truth the ultimate guarantee, the imperishable assurance to our faith, that *what* He undertaketh on behalf of sinners, *that* He will perform, to the uttermost pitch of infalible validity and unimpeachable perfection. Yet our confidence has a deeper root and a surer hold if, when looking at the work itself which He hath finished, we can see that it is adequate to its purpose, and does really compass the object for which it was designed. The two qualities of this work, which we have already considered, 1, its suitableness; and 2, its availableness, are plainly conducive to that which we now, 3dly, inquire into, namely, its sufficiency,—or rather, indeed, are pre-disposed by it; since whatever might be the intrinsic value and power of any system of man’s, efficient it could not be if either incapable of being brought to bear, or although brought to bear, unfit. But the vicarious righteousness of our Lord being wondrously adapted on every side to the original relations of God and man, and to that holy law which was the bond of their fellowship; being also communicable to others because not needful to himself,—our Lord’s vicarious righteousness, whether we look on its origin, its action, or its issues, is beyond all this, of a nature in itself so transcendent, so divinely surcharged with dignity, and strength, and goodness, and beauty, that, viewed in its proper place, as substituted for human nature’s debt of service or suffering, it may be seen immeasurably to surpass the utmost that flesh and blood could ever have attained, in the power to magnify alike the majesty and the mercy of Jehovah’s kingdom.

Look, first, at the *origin* of our Saviour’s righteousness—that primary pledge by which the foundation was laid for all the rest. “Being in the form of God, and counting it not robbery to be equal with God,” He consented, in accordance with the

Father's good pleasure, to the exinanition of His glory—consented to the incarnation of His Godhead—consented to the positive humiliation and dishonour of His person, so as to stand in the place of a creature—a creature perverted and accurst. The Lord God omnipotent had issued His mandate to Adam, fortified on this side and on that by promise and by commination. It had been transgressed, and the authority that enjoined it had been set at nought. But when a worm had dared to revolt, then Godhead drew near to do homage. When man had shaken his puny hand at him that sat on the throne, then the co-equal of that high Lord came to bow the knee at his feet. Nor was there any fallacy of mere show or seeming in the act. It was the vow of a sincere, reverential, fervent allegiance. How righteous that sovereignty which Godhead not only exercises but has obeyed! How sure that God will never renounce that royalty which He stooped into a subject's place to vindicate! A creature broke His law, the Creator engages to keep it! Is it that it may seem unholy? Is it that it may be abrogated? Man sets the rewards of obedience at hazard—he braves the punishment of transgression, deeming it perhaps too terrible to be seriously inflicted. The Son of God aspires to the meed, though none may touch it but at the expense of enduring the vengeance unmitigated. Is it that the Father's bounties may be neglected, or His terrors despised? No! it is that every understanding mind throughout all the realms of being, may see heaven in His favour and hell in His anger, as they never could be seen at any previous view. His law is good, it *shall* not be repealed; His will is absolute, it shall all be accomplished. As he liveth for ever, so “His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom, that which shall never be moved.” To demonstrate this He hath brought forth, not only the riches of unsearchable attributes, but also the resources, most marvellous, most adorable, of His triple Person—

ality in one Essence. Through these it became possible that He whose name alone is Jehovah, should hold at the same moment, the places of Creator and creature, of Lord and vassal, of Lawgiver and liege-subject; commanding, obeying, condemning, atoning, rewarding, and returning praise. Being possible, it was *done*, lest in forgiving man, his Maker should be dishonoured. And can such means be thought inadequate? Do we not see that they are all-sufficient? What majesty so exalted, so impregnable, as that before which Godhead has done obeisance? What submission so fruitful as that by which Godhead has girded itself to holy ministering, and bowed the head to penal humiliation?

It is manifest, however, that in this economy of wonders the maintenance of the Divine royalty was not more fully consulted than the exercise of the Divine mercy. Nay, while both objects were unitedly secured, no doubt is left us that, of the two, the end primarily contemplated was the unrestrained forthgoing of compassionate love to sinners. The apostacy of a creature, it is evident, can never really shake the throne of the Omnipotent, or grave an indelible stigma upon the righteousness of His administration. Without all question, if the offender be left to his doom, there is a world of means at God's disposal whereby to vindicate His own great name from reproach, and to preserve unabated the love and veneration of His children. The difficulties rise only when the rebel is to be forgiven. That is the case under which the power of God, or His holiness, or both, are liable to incur suspicion. Let his first care be the glory of his Crown;—that can be upheld with ease, although mercy to the wicked be a thing unthought of. But let his primary purpose be the pardon, renovation, and everlasting blessedness of those whose deeds are an abomination, and their just recompence destruction; and that can never be

reached until there first be provided an ample security for the honours and prerogatives of His high—His holy throne. The way to the maintenance of His supremacy does not of necessity lie through our salvation; but the way to our salvation does of necessity lie through the maintenance of His supremacy. Everything here that did not concern the exercise of saving love, could have been secured though Christ had never died; but if Christ had not died, saving love could never have come into action. The obstacles created by sin did not obstruct at all the path of justice, power, greatness—but only that of love; and, therefore, all that was done to clear them away, whatever in the work of redemption, was great and stupendous—whatever was strange, paradoxical, preternatural, never to be anticipated, and, save on Divine testimony, not to be believed; all this was primarily due to love—all originated in the unsearchable riches of the free grace of God. And so the Lord has stated it, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John iii. 16.) “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John iv. 10.) “For while we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, peradventure, for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. v. 6, 7, 8.) “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God.” (1 John iii. 1.)

The sum then and the result of what we have found is this. The vicarious righteousness of Christ, so far as respects that first and decisive act by which He undertook our redemption, (for of that we now speak,) is abundantly sufficient to ensure and

to proclaim the immutable righteousness of God in pardoning sinners; while yet it is, if possible, still more demonstrative of His unbounded mercy and love. The reason is plain. The exercise of judicial severities is God's "strange work," so He himself has expressly called it; (Isa. xxviii. 21,) but "He delighteth in mercy," (Mic. vii. 18,) for "God is love." (1 John iv. 8.) "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." (Ezek. xviii. 23—xxxiii. 11.) And if the punishment of the actual transgressors give God no pleasure for its own sake, much less can He receive delight, of that description, from the death of His well-beloved Son. That, of itself, must have been unspeakably repugnant to His paternal heart. Yet, love to our souls, moved Him to "Awake His sword and smite His Shepherd." (Zech. xiii. 7.) And it was the highest actual, if not the highest possible, manifestation of His love: for this is plainly implied in those forms of speech which announce the fact—"God *so* loved"—"God *commendeth* His love to us in this"—"*Herein* is love." If love, then, was of force sufficient to achieve completely this strange, pleasureless, reluctant work—if it was so strong and so resolved as thus to suppress its own proper impulses, and reverse its natural operations until sin were expiated, in order that afterwards it might flow freely in its native channels, is it not manifest that that point once gained—that difficulty once surmounted, an unbounded field of beneficence is open before it, in which to beautify and bless for ever even the sinners of our race, much more the faithful and holy angels? So the Scripture again determines it. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.) We therefore conclude, that the obedience unto death of our Lord Jesus Christ, if sufficient, as we are well assured it is, to vindi-



cate the Divine Sovereignty, is yet if possible much more so, to give proof of God's loving kindness; and by one marvellous work of vicarious righteousness, to bind all His holy offspring, not only in the bonds of awful submission and allegiance, but still far more in those of trust, desire, and joyful gratitude towards His ever-during goodness and tender mercy. Amen.

## LECTURE XII.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT REPROVES THE WORLD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

#### GOD'S IN JUSTIFYING SINNERS.

OUR last lecture was occupied with an endeavour to contemplate the sufficiency of Christ's mediatorial righteousness, as it appeared in that primary act of His obedience to the Father's will, by which He *undertook* the whole work of redemption. In the general view of the subject then taken, it was sufficient just to make mention of His incarnation, as necessarily pre-supposed to the actual execution of His high enterprise, and therefore embraced in the terms of His original consent to engage in it. He agreed to become man, because that was essential to His success in magnifying alike the sovereignty and mercy of God while saving the ungodly. But there is a special conduciveness to this end in the fact itself, that by *incarnation*, not otherwise, it was accomplished. The method employed, over and above its necessity, was wonderfully apt and efficient; to apprehend which truth, recollect for a moment what the method was.

Our blessed Lord was God, the only begotten Son of God, from eternity. When made flesh, He took into personal union with Himself a human being, real and complete in all the essential parts and properties of humanity. The intimate nature of this union is, of course, a mystery to us, who are a mystery to ourselves. But thus much we gather certainly from the Scriptures—that the Godhead and manhood so united, re-

tain each its own essence and attributes unchanged und intermingled, while both are truly and inseparably conjoined—conjoined in a manner far transcending every other union known to us,—for instance, that of our own souls and bodies, or of the saints and angels with God. One point, however, it concerns our present purpose to note particularly. The humanity of Christ has no distinct personality. His Godhead—a Person from eternity—continued the same person when he assumed our nature. “Before Abraham was,” said Jesus, “I Am.” (John viii. 58.) If we forget not the *reverence* due to the treatment of such a subject, I trust, we may without offence illustrate it thus:—When God, speaking to Moses in the bush, said, “I am the God of Abraham,” He named the Patriarch as a living person, though his body was then dead. We must, therefore, deem the soul a person, though separated from the body; but the body certainly is not a person without the soul. Yet the person complete is both soul and body united. In like manner, it seems quite warrantable to say that the Godhead of Christ was a person without the manhood; but the manhood never was a person without the Godhead; yet both united are the entire person, *θεανδρωπος*, *God-man*. And this marvellous conjunction, as it is singular and unparalleled, is also indissoluble and eternal. Even while the body and spirit of our Lord stood separated by death, his Godhead continued in union with both, just as a man, in unsheathing his sword, keeps his hold of both sword and scabbard. The humanity was dissevered, but the person was undissolved. The soul had rest in the bosom of God; the body, though in the grave, saw no corruption.

It amazes one to think of the summation thus made—the oneness thus established—of all things in the person of the Son of God. Paul speaking of the Law, says that all the precepts of the second table, and every other commandment like them, is

briefly comprehended, *ανακεφαλαιωται* (Rom. xiii. 9); in this saying, "Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself." But speaking of the creation, with special reference to holy angels and men, he teaches that God had purposed, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, to gather together in one—*ανακεφαλαιωσασθαι*—to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him. A new economy of things, no doubt, is mainly signified here. But how emphatic is the iteration with which the Apostle dwells upon the person of Christ, as the great principle of union, the life and head of all? Can he stand in such a relation without a fitness for it? And is not that fitness manifestly seen in the complexity of His person as God incarnate? The human nature in which he was born of the Virgin, and by which he suffered on the cross, is the same that revived and rose again; the same in which he ascended up on high, and sat down at the right hand of power, exalted over all, God blessed for ever. With that nature we are familiar, for it is our own! Children of the dust—we are yet fearfully and wonderfully made. Even in our animal frame, what strange essences and agencies and qualities concur! Mere matter, dead,—and, yet a marvel, constructive energy to organize it—life to quicken it—sense to inform it—instinct to guide it—and more than all the rest, a capacity of vital union and sympathy with substances immaterial and immortal; so that mind, the loftier element of our being, finds here not only a dwelling which it may own and occupy, but an instrument which it can freely wield to every purpose of our intellectual, moral, or spiritual existence. Surveying the entire field of our knowledge, what larger class of objects can we discover, that does not furnish its specimen to this curious cabinet of wonders—Man? From the unconscious atom that borders nearest on nothingness, up to the soaring Spirit that touches the confines of angelic intelligence and power, there is not any nobler ma-

terial or higher energy of nature that does not lend a portion of its riches to compose or fashion the microcosm of humanity. Whatever is known to have name or place betwixt the void of nonentity beneath, and the fulness of self-existent being on high—dust, vegetable, animal, spirit—all are in this one fabric concentrated and harmonized.

When, therefore, it pleased the Son of God, co-essential with the Father, to adopt the human nature, doubtless by its completest Exemplar, into near and ineffable union with his own Person, was not this constituting a new tie betwixt himself and His creation—in all its extent, from the highest ranks of being therein to the meanest? Each of them has its representative portion in Jesus. The Son of Man took part of them all to be part of himself; and in Him, at the same time, “dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col. ii. 9.) Is there not here a closer—a more sacred bond than before, betwixt the Maker and His workmanship? And what link is that which conjoins the created with the uncreated in our Lord Immanuel? What but the hand of the Almighty, saying, “Let it be so”:—the hand that bindeth the floods that they cannot overflow, with impalpable chains,—that bindeth the stars to their central stay, and restraineth them in their impetuous flight, as “one playeth with a bird, and bindeth it for his maidens.” (Job xli. 5.) But here it speaks not to join merely world with world, but to join all worlds with God. In Christ, it brings the woman’s seed—the summary, the *ανακεφαλαιωσις* of creation, not into the fellowship merely—for many are admitted to that—but into the singular union, the actual conjunction, of a personal identity with God the Son; an immeasurably firmer combination surely than the other! The powers of Heaven shall decay, but God-Man hath everlasting strength. “They shall perish,” it is written, “but thou remainest.” (Heb. i. 11.) The decree that upholds the present order and beauty of their systems, shall run its appointed

period of ages, and cease. Not so the decree which completes the Person, and perpetuates the glory of Jesus Christ; "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." (Heb. xiii. 8.) The marvellous complexity of His Being, itself indissoluble, is the stability of all in nature that cannot be dissolved;—the pledge that whatever is dissolved shall be organized anew. By assuming the elements of all things into Himself, He hath not, as was fabled of old, suspended this universe by a golden chain from the basis of His throne, but by the *fiat* of an omnipotent, immutable will, hath clasped it to the might and faithfulness and loving-kindness of His bosom!

This much being understood, it is not difficult to see what we have been seeking to descry—the inherent aptitude of our Lord's incarnation, superadded to its necessity, as a means for accomplishing the objects of His vicarious righteousness—that is, for establishing the sovereignty of God to the homage, and insuring the love of God to the confidence and joy of His creatures. Where power is irresistible, where authority is uncontrollable, where righteousness is absolute and impregnable, the nearer we are brought into the grasp and sweep of their exercise, the more is our loyalty commanded and confirmed, the more is our obedience perfected with all reverence and awe; and, in this respect, the law of our duty and of our privilege is the same. Let the love of heaven be plainly seen and truly felt at all, and its attractions are powerful. But let its glory break forth upon us, let us come *nigh* to the breathing influences of its tenderness, and it prevails at once against all estrangement,—all distrust and fear. As larger disclosures are made to us of its height, and depth, and length, and breadth,—as we better and better apprehend the constancy of its uncreated, unpurchased good-will,—as access free and more free is given us to drink deep and yet deeper of still clearer, and fresher, and profounder well-springs of its sympathizing compassion and



overflowing goodness, which giveth all things liberally, and upbraideth not—more especially when we see it, in the favour of gracious intent, unravelling perplexities inextricable save to heavenly wisdom, and scattering difficulties insuperable but to the right hand of Omnipotence, that through them all it may forgive, it may rescue, it may embrace, it may comfort us, and may wind up our blessedness with its own eternity,—then it is that, in like proportion, we learn to trust boldly, and to love fervently, and to *rejoice*, above measure and without end. But have such growing displays been any where made of the Divine Majesty on the one hand, or the Divine Love on the other? It need not be repeated. Both attain their highest exercise and exhibition, in that great mystery of All Godliness, “God manifest in the flesh, that He might be justified in the Spirit, be seen of angels, be preached unto the Gentiles, be believed on in the world, be received up into glory.” If, *apart* from His incarnation, He gave command to His creatures, as one having authority, who saith to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh: by *means* of His incarnation, He wields and rules the first principles of all things,—the abstracts of creation given in pledge to His person, even as the spirit of man controls and moves his own bodily members. If formerly His love was ever the breath of life to all His holy children,—yet now brought so wondrously near by His dwelling in flesh, it cheers their souls with the very airs of paradise, and perfumes their whole being with the incense of His inmost sanctuary. Nor let us say, as detracting from this truth, that, from the first, His greatness and love were, even as now, unchangeable and all-sufficient—that the wonders embodied in our Lord were but the work of attributes possessed before in all their perfection. It is so without question. Yet, when the object is to retain the whole family of intellectual and moral agents in the bonds of willing allegiance and filial reliance, the *reve-*

*lation* of those attributes is as needful as the *possession* of them; they become efficient by becoming known, and thus they do, in point of fact, reap a harvest of praises otherwise impossible, by being brightly and matchlessly displayed in the person of that Man of men, and Lord of angels, "The Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the Father of Ages, the Prince of Peace."

## LECTURE XIII.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT REPROVES THE WORLD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

#### GOD'S IN JUSTIFYING SINNERS.

THERE is much important wisdom, if considered as a fundamental axiom of human inquiry, in that saying of the poet, which, taken apart, is but a mere truism,—

“Whether in heaven above or earth below,  
What can we reason but from what we know?”

There are fields of truth and fact unbounded in extent, of which we are, by the law of our nature, in absolute ignorance, and which therefore have no other relation to our powers of mind than that of an infinite vacuum. But within the sphere assigned us there is a vast amount of truth which, investigated with due diligence, may certainly be known. This comprises the entire lesson which the Author of our existence and our happiness has presented for our learning in this earthly life; and if studied at once comprehensively and soberly, we may be very sure that, with regard to all the higher purposes whether of belief or action, it will never lead us astray. Nay, as the light thus vouchsafed to our eyes *will* seem to shed some rays upon the space beyond, and our imagination, following its guidance, still longs to frame some conception of the unseen and unknown—even such uncertain conjectures, the symbols of what may be, rather than the images of what is, if accompanied with reverence, and not mistaken for science, even *these*, have a tendency—

such is the benignity of our Heavenly Instructor—to promote the freedom, enlargement, and elevation of our souls. True, they seldom or never divine the exact reality of things; and where-soever speculation has been succeeded by actual discovery, as has often happened in the departments both of natural and Divine knowledge, it has uniformly proved that the fairest visions of the loftiest contemplation are far exceeded by the beauty and sublimity of truth.

The whole creation, it would seem, so far as it is known to us, may be embraced in a three-fold division, dead matter, living organization, rational spirit. These three, again, it is clear, are so combined in the single fabric of human nature, that man, being made as to his spirit in the image of God, can at will apply the living organs of his body, dust though they are, to the highest ends of God's service and glory, arriving by the very same path at the summit of his own appropriate perfection, and happiness. Thus, viewed on one side, he seems an epitome of creation; viewed on the 'other, he is manifestly fashioned in wonderful adjustment to the will and attributes and fellowship of his Maker—alike the Supreme Ruler and Supreme Benefactor. And, what is more, by such a frame, he appears capable both of being brought into any nearness of union with Godhead itself, which the purposes of heaven may require, and of constituting in that relation a most expressive and assuring pledge to the world of intelligent beings, that God will never relinquish or despise the meanest any more than the chiefest thing that He has made, but will for ever maintain a powerful and gracious hold upon the whole product and workmanship of His hands.

In last lecture I endeavoured to show that this object is achieved in the incarnation of the Son of God. In His humanity, all the essences and energies of creation are combined and gathered to a head. With them His Godhead is personally

united by an omnipotent, immutable decree. That union is not merely a magnificent semblance, a marvellous phenomenon, the ends of which are all answered simply through its being seen. It is a reality fruitful by its own nature of immediate effects peculiar and proper to itself. Amongst all the connections—and they are most real—which subsist between the Creator and His creatures, this is the junction, the bond, the link, which draws after it and sustains the mightiest and most glorious results. The whole of these consequences it were premature to speak of, but one or two for illustration may be mentioned here. When the filial Godhead put on humanity, the union was such that this brightness of the Father's glory and express image of His person could go forth enveloped and concealed in the likeness of sinful flesh—be seen for a season no more save as a helpless babe, an obscure youth, "a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people." (Ps. xxii. 6.) When His mission was finished, and he rose from the dead to ascend on high, the union *again* was such, that in this child of the dust, "whose face had been marred more than any man's, and His form more than the children of men," could now shine forth, not merely as beheld by the three disciples on the Mount, but in all the majesty of primeval brightness as adored by angels, *that same* effulgence of God's glory, those express lineaments, and express image of His person—and to add only what were sufficient of itself, Immanuel, God over all, reigns on His Father's throne, and *shall* reign for ever—a crucified man! There is therefore a true and perfect unity of person in Him. To all eternity He is one and the same. In Him, if the elements of all things meet, it is that the right of God to all things may be made good. "If in Him the first fruits are thus holy, it is that the lump also may be holy" (Rom. xi. 16)—consecrated, that is, to the Divine service. And, on the other side, in a sense Divine and unparalleled, "the Father loveth the Son!"

John iii. 35.) It is primarily the love of God to God; but in this blessedness, so far as accords with a created nature, the humanity shares. With man's lips did he testify, "In Thy presence is fulness of joy." (Ps. xvi. 11.) "Thou hast made the king most blessed for ever; Thou hast made him exceeding glad with Thy countenance." (Ps. xxi. 6.) And is not this to show that all creation represented and bound up in Him, so far as conformed to His image and will, shall enter, according to its nature, into His very joy, and that when, in the dispensation of the fulness of the times, God shall have "gathered together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him" (Eph. i. 10), then a new era shall open, when sin, with its estrangements, being utterly expelled, a perfect order of harmony and rest shall be established, that God may thenceforward be all things in all.

Our ignorance of many things should not here disturb our confidence in the conclusions drawn from what we certainly know. In God's created universe, one is apt to object, there may be many substances, many natures altogether unthought of by us—natures of which no sample or memorial can be seen in our own—natures, consequently, of which Christ, though incarnate, has assumed no portion, and in that manner, at least, has taken no hold. But to this hypothesis it is quite sufficient to oppose another—namely, that of these very natures the elements *may* lie hid within us, constituting an essential portion of our frame, and yet quite as insensible to our faculties as if lost in the abysses of space. This is ground on which we are not in condition to affirm or deny anything. But *there is* a world about us which we behold; of that world *there is* a summary in our own nature; with that nature, incarnate Godhead *is* indissolubly allied. From these unquestionable facts, what is the inference proper for us to draw? Surely, that in Christ Jesus,



God takes new and special possession of His own world entire, and once for all is married to whatever is holy in His rational creation, even in that case where breath and clay are of its essence. How perfectly does the instruction thus conveyed by the understanding and the circumstances which our Heavenly Father has assigned us, accord with the surer testimony of His word, concerning "His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins," even that "He is the image of the invisible God, the FIRST-BORN of EVERY CREATURE; for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." (Col. i. 13—17.)

We may seem to have dwelt too much at large upon these reflections. They include, however, a subject which if not treated in this connection, must have been considered separately, I mean the reality and efficacy of the *Hypostatic* union, of the *personal oneness*, that is to say, of the two natures in Christ.

The Hypostatic union, as an abiding fact, an actual constitution of the Divine will and power, is the very source and origin of that other great truth which demands our attention next in order—namely, the *sufficiency* of our Lord's obedience unto death, not as undertaken merely, but as performed, completed, wrought out, together with intrinsic and valid sufficiency, to justify sinners before God, when it is through faith imputed to them for righteousness. This, you will remember, was the second point of view under which we proposed to contemplate the worth of His vicarious labours and sufferings.

Before, however, attempting to discern what this purpose is—the effect of His personal unity, it will be convenient to touch upon another question—distinct, yet very nearly allied—the im-

portance of which can be equalled only by its sacredness. What is the relation in which the two natures of Christ—the Divine and the human—stand together in His oneness?

Of course, it is only the *practical* relation between them to which the question must be understood to refer. The intimate nature of that conjunction itself by which the created part in Him—how may one dare to express it?—cleaves to the uncreated; this is an unsearchable mystery. It is not for man to approach it. But the place which either nature holds in regard to the other, when they ACT unitedly—the harmony of their *operation*, as performing the same work, along with its diversity consequent upon their being essentially different in themselves—this is a matter not only conceivable to us, but very important to be reverently considered, and clearly apprehended. Confusion of thought upon the subject has a tendency not only to generate unsound notions collaterally, but to disturb and unnerve the calm assurance of our trust in that glorious righteousness itself through faith, in which we can alone be justified. Accordingly, the Church experienced, at a very early period, the necessity of gaining tenable and solid ground upon questions seemingly abstruse and speculative, but in reality touching the very heart and life of Christian godliness, at least in minds of an inquisitive cast; and few controversies of the Patristic age have left such precious fruits behind as that which taught the faithful to think at once rationally and scripturally with regard to the jointly-complex actings of God-Man, in the work of our redemption.

Precious is that record of the inspired historian—(Gen. i. 27)—“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him.” His iteration of the fact is very emphatic; it points without question at the union, then unforeseen on earth, but afterwards to be effected, of this new-created nature, with *His* very person who called it out of nothing, and it

came. "Known unto God are *all* His works from the beginning of the world." (Acts xv. 18.) And can we doubt that respect was had in the first formation of man to his coming exaltation, his chiefest dignity, a thing unparalleled and unheard of in the case of any other creature,—the privilege and glory ineffable of a personal union with the Creator? In the counsels of eternity provision was made that the seed of the woman should be capable of such identity with God's Eternal Son!—The ends in prospect were worthy of such means. But wherein lay the Human *Image* of Godhead? Surely, in that to which, as the Scripture teaches us, and as we have heard from our youth, regenerated man shall be created anew, namely, knowledge (Col. iii. 10,) righteousness, and true holiness. (Eph. iv. 24.) To the knowledge of the Godhead in Christ, then, corresponded His manhood—knowledge, short of infinite, but how enlarged we know not, which was imparted by the prophetic "spirit not given by measure unto Him." (John iii. 34.) With His divine righteousness again corresponded the godliness, rectitude, purity, of His man's heart and will, wrought and maintained in Him from first to last by that same Spirit of all grace. And to His uncreated holiness, even that harmony of all possible perfections, unclouded, unbounded, through which His name is Jehovah, and because of which the celestial powers, beholding His elevation on the throne, exclaim, "Worthy, worthy is the Lamb!"—to this corresponds once more His human holiness of body, soul, and spirit, generated by the Holy Ghost, and therefore holy born, (Luke i. 35)—perpetuated by the Holy Ghost, and therefore invincible to the powers of earth and hell,—in kind the same with that original holiness, suitable to His place, of the first Adam, who was of the earth earthy; but expanded and sublimed in just proportion to the work on earth and station on high, of "the Second Adam, which is the Lord from heaven." (1 Cor. xv. 47.) In these things consisted the mutual likeness

of Messiah's two natures; but in the very points wherein they were not like, but opposite, the alliance between them was perfect; inasmuch as *that* in Him which was created and dependent found its proper stay in that which was uncreated and self-dependent; whilst His Deity, of whom it is written, that "He upholdeth all things by the word of His power," (Heb. i. 3,) was infinitely sufficient to sustain uninjured the human frame which He had assumed into His person under what pressure soever of mental distress or physical suffering. Of a Being thus wondrously constituted for the express purpose of accomplishing a particular work, how sure might the expectation be that He would "do all things well" !

In the discharge of His Mediatorial functions, when knowledge and counsel were necessary, why should not all that was intellectual in this complex Being,—a Man conformed to himself, and impersonated by the primeval wisdom and word of God—conspire together in one harmonious act of judgment and decision? If the will of every regenerate man is framed already after the will of God, and one day shall be so perfectly, why should not Divine and human will, dwelling jointly in one individual, spring ever forward at once to the same holy deeds in perfect unison. In God it is that every child of Adam lives, and moves, and has his being; why then should not all the utterances and all the workings of Him who is pre-eminently the Son of Man, go forth in the strength of His indwelling Godhead? "But then He was a sufferer. Affliction, sorrow, and death, can never approach the Divine Essence." That is most true. But does God not understand these things? Can He not appreciate them? Is He insensible, untender? That be far from Him! The filial Godhead, who so compassionated the miseries of humanity at large, was unquestionably not indifferent to the fearful sufferings of His own personal portion in humanity. That entered fervently into His purpose of under-

going the curse for His people's sake, but entered with the bosom-intimacy of a Divine concernment and condolence, into all the pangs, and agonies, and sorrows of his living—dying habitation. But though there may be difficulty in conceiving of the harmony of Immanuel's griefs, there can be none in imagining that of His joys, where He reigns in glory, "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows."

An illustration in detail, it is easy to see, might be brought to bear upon these statements from the history throughout of our Saviour's life and death; but this, though it might be interesting, is not necessary, and we have barely space besides for bringing the whole contemplation to a point. It is in proceeding to do so, that the consideration of the *oneness* of our Lord's person, notwithstanding the diversity of His natures, becomes important. Because each nature is capable of a personal subsistence apart, we are apt to lose hold of the feeling that in Him they are personally one. Perhaps the best image of this unity is to be found in our own frame. We perform all outward works, discharge all earthly duties, our soul acting through our bodily organs. The devout and heroic spirit of David slew the Philistine by the right hand that wielded the sling, and the clear eye that directed the aim. The Godhead of Christ confounded Satan in the wilderness, and destroyed him on the cross, through the human mind and lips, by which he could say, in the one place, "It is written;" and in the other place, "It is finished." The person, not the dust, of David laid Goliath low; yet without the dust included in his person, the deed could not have been done. The person of Christ, which is in His Godhead, not His human tabernacle, overwhelmed the adversary; yet without the humanity, that greatest of triumphs could never have been won. But no one ever thinks of dissevering David's person into two, because he consists of two essences, soul and body; and then ascribing his

actions to the visible and inferior, rather than to the spiritual nature. So neither should the person of Christ be in imagination dissevered, or the seat of His personality be ever misplaced. The Son of God should no otherwise be regarded than as God himself, performing all the mighty work of our redemption, through His assumed human nature, the appropriate organ, living and dying, of His own Divine and sovereign operation. The conclusion is obvious, "He is the Rock; His work is perfect." Could He fail in His enterprise? Could He come short of His design? Is not the endurance of death in human form, by the Prince of Life, an atonement sufficient for the sins which He would take away? Surely there is in His finished righteousness an infinite fulness, a celestial sanctity, a Divine all-sufficiency, in the contemplation of which, at even this distant and general view, we may well join the beloved disciple in his rapturous thanksgiving, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."



## LECTURE XIV.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT REPROVES THE WORLD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

#### GOD'S IN JUSTIFYING SINNERS.

LET us pursue our reflections upon the sufficiency of our Saviour's obedience, as it was actually practised and completed.

That our Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true man—that the two natures are conjoined in Him by a real and efficacious union—that the seat of His personality is the Godhead, while manhood, assumed into His person, is the conscious and willing organ of His Divine operation as Redeemer—these facts made known to us by Revelation, are the living root from which springs the all-sufficiency of His vicarious righteousness. Of old ordained the Covenant Head, the Mediator, the Surety of His People, “When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Gal. iv. 4.) That redemption He accomplished, first, in living such a life that, “as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one should many be made righteous” (Rom. v. 19); and, next, in dying such a death that “He might thereby redeem us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” (Gal. iii. 13.) Neither God apart, nor man apart, but God-Man did this. Assuming our place by the Father's will, He undertook *our* responsibilities, He conferred on us His own worthiness, and

so furnished His apostle with the ground of that pathetic appeal, "We pray you in Christ's stead be reconciled to God; for He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 20, 21.)

Now, whether we look at His active obedience, on the one side, His prophetic teachings, His priestly intercessions, His royal exercises of prerogative; or, whether, on the other side, we regard His passive obedience, (for so Theologians make the distinction); *i. e.*, His expiatory sufferings, from first to last, but especially on the Cross, it will not be difficult, I hope, to make it appear that, to the whole of this obedience together, there belong three characteristics, conducing alike to its intrinsic worth, and its impressive significance, which may satisfy our minds that it is in truth a great deep of righteousness, impossible for us to fathom, but evidently most worthy, so far as our apprehensions reach, to hold the place assigned it in the dispensation of mercy. These characteristics are:—

1. A Divine singularity.

2. A Divine perfection.

3. And, as regards the Father and the Holy Spirit, a Divine nearness.

1. The vicarious righteousness of Christ has a Divine singularity. It is obedience in one to whom supreme command is native and proper. This can be said of no other obedience.

In making an affirmation so strange, it is meet that we look well to our grounds of Scripture testimony. Here, however, they are most explicit and unequivocal. (Phil. ii. 6,) "Being in the form of God, *εὐ μορφῇ Θεοῦ*, and for that reason thinking it not robbery (*ἀρπαγμα*) to be equal with God, *ἴσα εἶναι τῷ Θεῷ*, He made himself of no reputation, *ἑαυτὸν ἐκενώσε* and took upon Him the form of a servant, *μορφὴν δούλου*." What is properly meant by *δουλος*? A servant in the strictest sense, a bondman. Who

took this form upon Him? The same that made Himself of no reputation. But who, again, did this? He who thought it not robbery, because He knew it a rightful thing to be equal with God. It was true Godhead, then, that in Him took the form of a servant. The form? Does the Scripture mean by this that it was *but* the form which He assumed, and not the reality? It cannot be so understood, for using the same term, *μορφη*, in manifest parallelism, a little before—"Being in the form of God"—it immediately adds as the just consequence of having the FORM, that He exercised the POWERS and *prerogatives* of God. The reality of Godhead, therefore, is implied in this form in the one case; therefore, surely, so is the reality of servitude in the other. One Person, moreover, held both forms in succession; or, rather, since Godhead cannot lay itself aside, held both realities together. It is true, He was made in the likeness of men, but that was consequent upon His taking the form of a servant, and, accordingly, is mentioned after it. Without doubt, it was when found in fashion as a man that He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross; for Godhead could not actually die, but it could and did stoop to the lowliness of death. A wonderful sight! The Son of God as well as man, "Come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, *ου διακονηθηναι, αλλα διακονησαι*, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matt. xx. 28.)

The truth, however marvellous, being clearly such, let us steadily keep in view our general notion of this Saviour, in order to observe His special character. "He was made under the law, as surety of a better testament." (Gal. iv. 4; Heb. vii. 22.) He took the place and assumed the responsibilities of His people under the Adamic covenant which still held them fast bound, its condition broken, its blessing forfeited, its penalty incurred; and His part was to re-achieve for them the blessing by exhausting the penalty, and perfectly fulfilling the condition.

Now, as to the essence and spirit of the law, its requirements were the very same to Adam and to his posterity. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart : thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"—this was the great principle which Adam observed while abstaining from the forbidden fruit, and which he violated in eating it; just as with regard to all the duties, sacred or common, of his descendants, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom. xiii. 10.) To this, therefore, the Lord had reference when He said, "I am come not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil." (Matt. v. 17.)

The Second Person of the Godhead had ever the Divine love of a Son towards His Father, and of a Creator towards mankind. But within the Covenant of Grace, this love becomes modified, to suit, on the one hand, His condition as a Servant, and on the other, His function as a Redeemer. It is Divine love, as under command, rendering obedience to God; it is Divine love, as in a work of redemption, making sacrifice of itself for man. This is a new and a singular thing. It is the theme of Christ's New Song in the Fortieth Psalm (ver. 3). "In the volume of the book this was written of Him." But the annals of even heavenly allegiance and heavenly mercy furnish no other instance comparable to this,—nothing besides of the same kind. It stands alone. Nothing but very Godhead could yield such obedience or pay such a ransom. Its peculiarity is unexampled, unapproachable, just because it is Divine. Who shall set bounds to the intrinsic value of such a work, or to the weight and efficiency which rightly belong to it in the counsels of God's wisdom or the emergencies of His moral government? To do so were to limit the Infinite. Let it not confound our thoughts that the Filial Godhead brought all its fulness to dwell bodily in Jesus of Nazareth : and that He put forth the energies of His love—all its acts of obedience and of grace, through the knowledge, zeal, and strength of appropri-

ated humanity.—What was divine in His love lost nothing of its nature or worth, by animating and actuating what was human. It was Godhead surely that gave forth the oracle, “All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. xi. 27.) The declaration, the call, and the promise, are worthy of a Divine Person, and would be presumption in any other. Are they rendered less true, less gracious, or less powerful, by coming to our ears through the mind, and heart, and lips of man? It is the heavenly source, not the created channel, which gives character to these blessed announcements of Christ our Prophet. Not less Divine is the Priestly intercession, though uttered by One who a little before had washed His disciples’ feet,—“Father, I will that they also whom Thou gavest me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me, for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O, righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent me.” When the Daughter of Zion beheld her King coming unto her, meek, and sitting upon an ass,—His way strewed with garments and green branches (Matt. xxi. 5, &c.;) while the multitudes that went before and followed after cried, saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the Highest”—and when “He went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, MY HOUSE shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves,”—Was the majesty with which He not only scattered the repacious and overawed the powerful, but assumed the title,

and port, and prerogative of royalty in the very sanctuary of God and over all that it contained—was this the less Divine or less sure of achieving all that it purposed, because greatness went forth through the holy zeal and indignation of spotless, matchless Man? The sovereignty of His anger was then as resistlessly felt by the proud and the mighty who quailed before Him as was the sovereignty of His mercy experienced by the “blind and the lame who came to Him in the temple and He healed them.” (Ver. 14.) Everywhere and over all creation His power was the same. Arising from sleep, and with man’s voice rebuking the sea, (Matt. viii. 26,) it heard Him, for God had spoken, “and there was a great calm.” Despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, yet when Legion beheld Him afar off, and heard His command, “Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit,” “he ran and fell down before Him, and cried with a loud voice, and said, what have I to do with Thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure Thee, by God, that Thou torment me not;—then instantly obeyed. (Comp. Luke viii. 32; Mark v. 6.) In all these works, and innumerable others like them, or equally with them pertaining to His mediatorial office, the Godhead of Jesus wrought; wrought in obedience to the law—wrought in the form of a Servant, as truly as did His Manhood.

But if, in the active obedience of the Son of God, we thus see a Divine *singularity*, still more strikingly must that characteristic appear in His passive obedience in His sufferings. It is more difficult for us, without doubt, to think clearly, and yet reverently, of the part which His Divinity took in the exercise of this function of His suretiship than in the other. But even within the limit which our meditations may safely approach, there is much to be seen in it that goes to enhance our adoring sense of the worthiness, beyond price, beyond reckoning, which belongs to the Lord’s vicarious righteousness. Why did the



only begotten Son of God, the co-equal partaker of His essence, leave at all the throne of His Father? Why did He ever lay aside His original glory? It was in order to take the place of sinners;—and this again He did in order to redeem them. But their redemption could no otherwise be effected than through assuming their guilt, and making Himself answerable to the penal justice of God for all their wickedness. Wrath from Heaven is the righteous recompense of sin; and therefore he that would atone for it, must really and actually, in what manner soever it may be, present himself as the object of wrath, and undergo, to the last spark, its fiery inflictions. God forbid we should imagine that the Father's love towards His only begotten Son was changed, when He made Him to be sin for us. Far from us be the impiety of thinking that sorrow, or pain, or death, could touch what was Divine in the Lord Jesus, otherwise than by gracious care and concern, calling forth the needful strength, which it accorded with his nature in the circumstances to exert. It was His manhood alone that experienced and endured, in body, soul, and spirit, the woes and agonies of the curse. In that manhood, nevertheless, dwelt all the fulness of His Godhead. It was Godhead that undertook the task of redemption. Of Godhead, therefore, did the Father exact the ransom. What else could provide it? By Godhead was the shock and burden of that wrath sustained, which, falling upon mere created being and strength, would have ground it to powder. By its personal presence and agency, in that paroxysm of unexampled Human suffering, did Godhead fully acknowledge the evil desert of that sin which it was expiating; acquiesce in the justice of that fearful retribution which through flesh it was enduring; magnify the heavenly Sovereignty under whose sentence it was reverently bowing; and bear testimony to those unfathomable tender mercies of the Father's bosom, to which ultimately it was due

that "He thus spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for the perishing." In all these acts—given by way of example rather than of enumeration—it is plain that the Lord from heaven not only divested Himself of glory, *ἐαυτον ἐκενωσε* (*that took place at His nativity*), but humbled Himself *ἐταπεινωσε*, becoming through His humanity—even the Incarnate Person—obedient unto death. Yes, it is carefully to be noted that the words are written of the entire person, God Incarnate—*γενομενος ὑπηκοος μεχρι θανατου, θανατου δὲ σταυρου*. Surely, then, we find in this redeeming work a Divine *peculiarity*. It is an obedience *sui generis*. It is the actual operation and performance of Godhead, made subject to the law which was written for man; and, acting as one under authority, to whom it is said, "Go, and he goeth; or, Come, and he cometh; or, Do this, and he doeth it;"—nay, Suffer this, and he finds means to suffer it. And so, not by any figure of speech, or in the way of impressive exaggeration, but in the strictest literality of meaning—it is Divine obedience in a servant. A *definition*, and not a metaphysical description, is given of our justifying righteousness when it is called the Righteousness of God.

But does not this take away its character of human subjection to the law in doing and suffering? And is not God therefore robbed, after all, of the service, and the satisfaction to His offended justice due at the hands of apostate Adam and his seed? By no means. These are superadded,—not set aside or altered,—but presented perfect in their kind.

This part of the subject, however, must now be reserved for future consideration.

## LECTURE XV.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT REPROVES THE WORLD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

#### GOD'S IN JUSTIFYING SINNERS.

As the oneness of Person in our Lord was necessary in order to make the whole of His vicarious obedience stand as the work of our Saviour, so the entire and unaltered distinction of His two natures was indispensable; if His course of conformity to the Law as a servant was to have the infinite worth of a Divine, and yet the genuine character of a human righteousness. Had there been, as some of the ancient heretics imagined, a conversion or confusion of the natures in Him, the obedience rendered must have undergone a similar transformation, and instead of being either Divine or human, must have consisted of something intermediate between both, neither consummating under its mediatorial form of subjection, the Son's everlasting and unchangeable love to the Father, nor yielding to the Law, what it demanded, a true performance of its requirements at the hand of its proper and only vassal, man.—Having attempted to show how conceivable it is that Godhead, as incarnate, should bear a real part, according to its nature, not in the performances only, but also in the sufferings (though itself *impassible*) of this willing servitude, let us now consider—a very few remarks will suffice for the purpose—how perfectly the human character of it throughout is nevertheless preserved.

The perplexity and misgiving of our thoughts upon this subject arise from the vast magnitude—suited only to Omnipot-

tence—of the work to be performed, in connection with the actual indwelling of Godhead in the human agent. To assume the guilt of a world—unbroken to exhaust Almighty wrath—so to replace the failing righteousness of an entire species, and so surpass the worthiness of its utmost services had they been perfect, as to earn for it an advancement to honours far transcending its first estate, and for himself a throne at the right hand of glory, was an achievement quite beyond the reach of mere created strength. “Divinity, therefore,” we may well say, “alone could work these wonders ! and Divinity resided in the Redeemer.”

Without all doubt it was his Divine power primarily that wrought the whole ; but then it did work in part by sustaining, strengthening, exalting the humanity to the full height of its necessary and effective actings. The dear Son of God, created all things visible and invisible. (Col. i. 16.) “He is before all things, and by him all things consist.” (Col. i. 17.) “He upholdeth all things by the word of His power.” (Heb. i. 3.) His own human soul and body, therefore, are in the number,—are doubtless the very highest and chiefest—of the all things which were created by Him, and consist by Him, and are upheld by Him.

In the days of his flesh, when the extremity of toil and suffering were his portion ; in the summit of exaltation, when his “kingdom reigneth over all,” the being and substance of this man was, and is preserved by the faithful Creator ; his fabric of soul and body kept perfect and entire by the All-wise Constructor ; his faculties and powers, natural, intellectual, and moral, sustained in the sphere and action proper to them, by the Omnipotent Upholder, who, from the nativity, and onward for ever, assumes and inhabits this glorious temple of humanity. While provision is thus made for the subsistence, life and energies of His natural frame, His holiness and rectitude, whether in suf-

fering or in reigning, are infallibly secured from all possibility of sin by the Holy Spirit, which, proceeding from the Father, proceedeth also from the Son; and resting in all fulness on His own manhood, makes Him fairer than the children of men, pours all grace into His lips, and inspires His heart with all the sanctities of wisdom, love, zeal, patience, might, which the acts and functions of His Messiahship may require, in whatever abyss of humiliation it may be, or at what sublime height soever of dignity and dominion. The Divine power of both the Son and Spirit is doubtless here put forth, nor is that of the Father absent from this any more than from the other works of his providence; but its operation is employed not in transforming the human nature of Christ into some other nature aside from humanity, or beyond its compass; but in preserving all its essential parts and properties unaltered in their kind, while it strengthens and elevates them into such conformity as God sees to be meet with the place which they hold in His universe—a place unapproachable to any other created thing. Of every ordinary saint, the entire being and character, whether as derived from nature or from grace, is upheld by the same Divine power of Father, Son, and Spirit; yet he is only a man, and all his performances are a man's work. While it is God that worketh in him both to will and to do, it is he himself, by that very means, that both wills and does. So it is also then with the man Jesus, and with His obedience. It is true that the Godhead stands to Him in a relation altogether singular by the hypostatic union. Still the Scriptures most expressly assure us that this relation alters not the fact of His being a real man. "The Son of Man" is still His constant designation; and all his recorded doings, before His resurrection and after, whether He bear our sins in His own body on the tree, or come to judge the world in righteousness, are ever described as the deeds of THAT MAN whom God hath ordained. (1 Pet. ii. 24;

Acts xvii. 31.) While his vicarious righteousness, then, includes, as we saw before, the undoubted acts of Divinity self-humbled into the form of a servant, it embraces also, as plainly, the labours and sufferings of humanity, strictly and properly so called. To gather up the result, therefore, in one word. Such as is the Lord himself, such also is the righteousness of the Lord. In person one, yet consisting of Divine and Human. His obedience is also one, but consisting of Divine and Human too. This glorious Being, whom we call Immanuel, is He the less God because he is a man? or the less a man because He is God? Assuredly not. His righteousness, then, by which He fulfilled the law, of which we say that in it alone are sinners justified, is it the less Divine for being Human, or the less Human for being Divine? By no means. It is both the one and the other unitedly, like Himself,—the Elect Servant of God, who wrought it out unto perfection. It follows, then, (for that is the point in view,) that it is a righteousness Divinely Peculiar. For if He is Himself a person peculiar and peerless in the universe of God, (as He is the only-begotten Son of God, the First-born of every creature, a style which cannot belong to more than one), is not His work equally singular among all the kinds and qualities of obedience? Has it an equal? Has it a parallel? Is there in existence any other righteousness that comes under the same description? We know, and can conceive of none. The supposition is contrary to what is revealed concerning the Work-master. If He stands alone, so do His deeds. Whoever, save the Son of God, gave to divine achievements—all-worthy of the name—the form and issues of a human obedience under law? What son of man, but Jesus of Nazareth only,—the sanctuary of indwelling Godhead,—was ever called to personal fellowship with Godhead, in the suretiship of redemption,—and found equal to all the exigencies of that high enterprise,—the most glorious that hath yet been looked into by men or angels,—not only in



those acts of omniscience and of royalty where Godhead exercising its proper attributes and prerogatives, bore aloft his created nature along with it; but also in those hours of dread and of anguish, when Godhead being incapable of participating, though it could support,—the penal execution of the curse spent all its force on his created nature *only*? On whichever side we view this marvellous righteousness, it is a work stamped throughout with the character of a Divine peculiarity. An end entirely new was contemplated in the Divine counsels, namely, the salvation of sinners. A means equally new was devised for its accomplishment,—the mediatorial obedience of Christ. And if God sets a value upon every fresh work of His hands, because it is a fresh product of His perfections, surely this work, in its singularity, is to be specially prized, which on an emergency hitherto unprecedented, springs out of that in His nature, which, of itself, is most excellent and precious, as well as most venerable and attractive to His creatures—the harmony of His sovereign justice and saving mercy? But I refrain, fearing that I have pursued this part of the subject to a disproportionate length, and hasten to add a few observations, indicating, rather than illustrating, the next characteristic mentioned of our Saviour's righteousness, namely, a Divine Perfection.

II. On the side of His higher nature as He is Jehovah, it needs no evidence to show that His work is perfect. And on the side of His Manhood, the point now in question is not the higher sphere,—inaccessible to any other creature—in which its deeds of holiness were displayed; (*that* belongs to their peculiarity)—but it is their faultless perfection, excellence, and beauty in that sphere. It is, indeed, impossible any way to contemplate the work of our Lord as it is, and not have its peculiarity still before our eyes; yet upon that very ground we may the better appreciate its unrivalled perfection, and feel that even as exhibited in His humanity it savours of the Divine! God is Love. He loves His holy creatures and He loves even sinners—

hence "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. v. 6.) Now, this is the perfection of love, when its feelings are stirred and its powers are exerted in favour and great kindness, to those who not merely are destitute of such qualities as tend to kindle and cherish it, but exhibit all those hostile and odious characteristics that go to extinguish it wholly, and rouse the opposite sentiments of abhorrence and indignation. But the love of Immanuel to His people has this very perfection. His soul of a Man is full of such gratuitous tenderness, and unquenchable loving-kindness, and unconquerable good will to the vilest undeservers. "Ye have heard that it was said of old time, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." He gave the precept, and it was the transcript of His own life. Not merely in so far as the hatred of men could not reach Him, but also in that infirm and vulnerable part, where their enmity could grieve His spirit, and their hardness provoke His anger, and their reproaches break His heart—when the Prince of Darkness himself found fit subjects in them for the inspirations of his own cruelty and falsehood and malice—fit instruments through which the gates of hell might strive to the uttermost against the holy Lamb of God, and persecute Him to the death—even then He loved as He had taught, and prayed as He had commanded, and wrought as none but Himself could do, bringing salvation to His enemies. "When they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified *Him*, and two *malefactors*, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii. 33.) This is a specimen of his love to men, through which as a Man he fulfilled the second table of the law. In all points, its fervour, and strength, and

insuperable endurance were the same. It never abated, it never faltered, it never failed to execute the good which it designed for the unworthy. A man's benevolence,—it yet breathes of the Divinity within. It was complete—it was faultless; and before the very eyes of flesh and blood, it bodied forth on earth the love of heaven.

If any thing could transcend this, it were His human fulfilment of the first table of the law in loving God. And the circumstances considered, this does, indeed, surpass all that we have heard or been taught to conceive of in the field of arduous, and all but impossible, attainment. For, in His position, what manner of love was required of Him, and towards what attributes of the Infinite in their mightiest action? Laden with all the crimes and enormities of men—a multitude which cannot be numbered—He stood bound to undergo whatsoever the justice of the Most High, in the act of putting forth its whole energy, and vindicating its Sovereignty before all worlds, might inflict upon His created frame, upheld for the very purpose of enduring it to the last, as the just and equal recompense of such untold iniquities. In love He was to endure this—love to the Right Hand of Power that smote Him. I cannot now pursue the theme. In truth, its depth and grandeur pass far beyond the limits of all human comprehension, except His own that suffered on the cross. But of this we are sure, that, in the obedience of that hour, the All-seeing eyes descried no fault. Weighed in the balances of heaven, that righteousness was found full and adequate to the uttermost grain. Tried by the touchstone of Divine perfection, tested even in the furnace of Divine wrath, its gold was found pure, precious, and utterly without alloy. On all hands, in short, and through the entire range of holy achievement in His office, Jesus approved Himself a child of God, without rebuke, the Beloved Son in whom the Father was well pleased.

## LECTURE XVI.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT REPROVES THE WORLD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

#### GOD'S IN JUSTIFYING SINNERS.

IN the last lecture, after dwelling at some length on the Divine peculiarity of our Saviour's righteousness, we referred very briefly to its Divine perfection—its perfection in His Godhead, but especially in His humanity—its perfection as fulfilling the law of love to God and man, alike in doing and in suffering. It is not necessary now to resume the subject farther perhaps than to remark, that besides the fact before adverted to, namely, the impossibility of having the law fulfilled by man at all, unless the Lord Jesus had fulfilled it; besides this, there is a perfection in His human obedience, such and so entire, as never was reached by any other created nature. “The heavens are not clean in God's sight,” (Job xv. 15,) said Eliphaz to Job, “Behold He put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly.” The statement, no doubt, may be regarded as possibly one of those for which the Lord was displeased, and said to Eliphaz and his two friends, “Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.” (Job xlii. 8.) Yet being reported as a truth made known in vision to the Temanite, this is not probable; and if understood not as imputing any *moral* uncleanness to the holy angels, which it certainly cannot be intended to do, but simply as declaring them limited in wisdom and strength, and though very glorious, yet in every thing dependent upon Divine support; this is only what belongs to

their condition as creatures. It implies, however, their fallibility. Nay, it seems to indicate that before the all-searching eyes of God, there may be in their service certain slight mistakes, or small defects of execution, quite innocent, because quite unconscious and involuntary, which at the same time pertain distinctly to created imperfection. The inference therefore is, that even in heaven itself the human obedience of our Lord is the only instance of righteousness in a creature that is absolutely free from all deficiency, natural as well as moral. That His is so, who can question? The folly with which he charges his angels must be totally alien to His own person. Limited, no doubt, He is, in so far as He is man; but just as the holiness of His Divinity is absolute and without fault, on the throne of being, in the fields of immensity; so are the frame and actings of His human nature in every thing exactly true to the rule of that holiness, without deviation, without shortcoming, without excess, in the sphere which belongs to them. And what a sphere! The loftiest which it is possible for any thing not essentially divine to occupy, involving the exercise of prerogatives the most sublime, and functions the most momentous, far above the height of angelic attainment, in mysterious community with Godhead itself! For of Him it is written, with manifest reference to His mediatorial work in flesh, that "when He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He had by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?—Of the angels he saith, who made his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom; thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of

gladness above thy fellows." Need any thing more be said after this to show the divine perfection of our Saviour's righteousness, not only of his primeval holiness, but of his vicarious obedience? Or need any doubt arise how far that perfection conduces to its atoning sufficiency? If its character be inquired into, the answer is, in absolute terms, without exception or limitation, "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity." And if its worthiness be in question, let that be estimated by the greatness of its reward. "Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." And how long is the felicity to last unchanged? "The heavens and the earth shall perish, but thou remainest; and they shall all wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

So much for the Divine perfection of our Saviour's righteousness, an attribute in which, as regards the created parts in him, it stands as much alone as in its Divine singularity. The third characteristic mentioned, as naturally conducing to its all sufficiency, is—

III. A Divine nearness with respect to the Father and the Holy Spirit. In one point of view the reality of this characteristic and its sacred importance, are truths of an extremely obvious kind. Indeed, it is impossible to contemplate the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ at all, remembering that He is the co-essential, co-equal Son of God, without perceiving that it comes nigh to the other persons of the Godhead, and touches their being and their glory in a way which it were impiety to imagine and blasphemy to affirm, that any other obedience whatever could approach within a distance less than infinite. But in another view, when we begin to attempt *conceiving* of this nearness, and forming some conjecture of what its prevailing influence and effect must be, we are instantly overwhelmed with the greatness, and—if God's fear be in us—overawed by the sacredness of the



subject. I therefore referred to it at all, not as imagining it possible for any man to expound it intelligibly, but rather in the hope of leading you to feel, that in the Lord's work of redeeming service and suffering, there is a great deep of acceptability and of good desert which we shall the more reasonably believe inexhaustible, just because we have found it unfathomable. When Moses drew near to admire the bush that burned with fire and yet was not consumed, a voice issued from the brightness, which said, "Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." (Exod. iii. 4, 5.) And when we lift up our souls to contemplate that marvel amid all that is marvellous, a divine-human obedience practised and presented on our behalf in the very bosom of Godhead, with what demonstrations of reverence, at what humble distance does it beseech us to behold it, borrowing if we could those wings of the seraphim with which they veil their faces before the throne, lest we offend by too direct and too daring an inspection!

The reasonable love of knowledge in Moses was not disappointed. The wonder which first attracted his observation was explained; but it was explained by another wonder, the glory of which exceeded all comprehension:—God had come down in person to deliver his people from bondage. In like manner, it is given us to know, that our Redeemer's righteousness is a reality—that it is a righteousness very near to God, and that in its nearness our welfare is ensured. A Divine voice informs us also, that Christ, "by the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God" (Heb. ix. 14); that He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us, even into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. (Heb. ix. comp. v. 12 and 24.) Distinctly, then, we learn that our deliverance is effected by the public oblation of his righteousness in God's immediate presence, an honour and an efficacy of which it was worthy, because wrought by Christ's Eternal Spirit in

His flesh. Its original and essential nearness, we see, gave occasion to its official nearness, and by both together, it accomplishes our redemption.

But to reach the fountain head of this salvation, and look into the bright abyss of its waters, this is what we must not venture on too boldly. The existence of three several Persons in the Godhead, and the pervading influence of their mutual relations upon the plan of redemption throughout are facts expressly revealed to us. But the effect of presuming to fix our eyes directly on the glory of their relative actings, and attempting to view them with open face would be, instead of informing, to dazzle, perhaps to blind us. God has himself taught us how to contemplate His majesty without sin or danger. He hath made all things double. He hath filled creation with emblems significant of Himself. Knowing that with eyes of flesh we could not see Him and live, He hath instructed us in the mysteries of His nature, so far as we are capable of learning them, by making our own nature and mutual relationships a kind of parables, justly, though distantly, suggestive of His. The universal bond of paternity and sonship among men—the power granted us to breathe the influence of our sentiments and feelings through our lips, are matters of home experience, familiar to our thoughts, by which He leads us to conceptions indefinite, no doubt, yet strong, abiding, and affecting, of what the Father's meaning is in calling Christ His only begotten Son, and calling the Holy Ghost His Spirit, *πνευμα 'αυτου* *His breathing*. Nor is it only in the original relations themselves that He marks the analogy. It is pursued a long way into their consequences! Nay, to assist us in trusting confidently to the efficacy of those relations among the Persons of the Godhead, He stoops to place himself in the like positions towards ourselves. "Touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you; and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi.

17, 18.) Accordingly He hath given us "the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. viii. 15), and taught us, on the other side, "what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" (Heb. xii. 7.) And again, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matt. vii. 11.) How natural is it, after this, to apprehend a most important and impressive meaning in these words on the Father's part, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." (John iii. 35.) "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. v. 8), and also from these other words on the Son's part, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." (John v. 19.) "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father, and no one knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is but the Son—and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him." (Luke x. 21, 22.) "O, my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (Matt. xxvi. 39.) Here is the language of real, living, joyful, dutiful, submissive Sonship. We cannot hesitate to receive it as the index of what passes between Person and Person of the one adorable Godhead. Need we hesitate, then, to apply it, through the medium of what also passes among men, in illustration of that which we speak of—the *Divine nearness* of our Lord's mediatorial obedience? What father, having earnest, difficult, painful efforts to be made, for the accomplish-

ment of some great and glorious object, will not rejoice if his only son undertake the task, pursue it, persevere in it, complete it, and bring back in triumph the perfect fruits of his toils and sorrows?—what father will not greatly more rejoice than if all had been achieved by a stranger, more especially if the end were such that no stranger could achieve it? How much more would the work appear great and excellent in his eyes for the nearness of Him who performed it: nay, what real worth and virtue would that circumstance impart to it, beyond what could accrue by any other means? Transfer the observation from human things to Divine. Consider the value of nearness when it amounts to identity, the nearness of God to God. Consider the worth of Divine service rendered to Divine majesty in the very sanctuary of uncreated love and infinite fellowship—service, the object of which is to repair the ruin of worlds, and give Omnipotence occasion, no otherwise accessible, of rejoicing for ever in all His works, and then it will appear what high accession is brought to the sufficiency of our Lord's mediatorial work, by this third peculiarity,—its Divine nearness to the Father, and by parity of reason, to the Spirit.

## LECTURE XVII.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT REPROVES THE WORLD OF JUDGMENT.

IN three particulars it was proposed to set forth the excellency and all-sufficiency of Christ's righteousness—that is, in its origin, its exercise, its end. But in the process of illustrating the two former of these, the latter, as will happen, in matters so closely related, has been anticipated to some extent—so far, indeed, that without any additional statement on the point, it may, I think, be understood how a course of action, pointing to so exalted and glorious an aim, as the everlasting union and blessedness of God's holy creation, under the shadow of his unchangeable and most gracious sovereignty, must derive incomparable worth from the supreme worthiness of its object, if in conception, spirit, and execution, the work prove equal to the design. Righteously to aspire after the noblest ends if there be power to reach them, imparts, indeed, its highest value and lustre to the enterprise itself; and surely the prosecution of such a purpose as this by the Son of God, was employment not less becoming his nature, and his place in the universe, than was that previous work of Providence by which he upheld and governed his own creation. Besides the obviousness of this fact, the treatment of it in detail would necessarily lead to such extended inquiries regarding the condition of the world after the general judgment, and regarding the heavenly state especially, as must leave little to be added on these important subjects in their proper

place. In hope, therefore, that the views already presented of the unsearchable riches of Christ in his vicarious righteousness, may have answered the purpose of showing that they *are* unsearchable,—nearly all that, on such a theme, can be attempted,—it seems best to enter now upon the remaining branch of our general plan. We saw, at least in the main particulars, how the Paraclete, agreeably to the Lord's announcement of his functions, reproves the world of sin first, and then of righteousness. Let us now address ourselves to the consideration of his concluding work. "He will reprove the world of judgment because the Prince of this world is judged."

Few passages of Scripture, perhaps, of which both the terms and subject are familiar, have caused more difference of opinion among interpreters as to their exact meaning than this one has done. The reason seems to be the great reach and comprehensiveness of the proposition itself. It contains a variety of allied, yet distinct points of doctrine, to one of which one commentator has been led, by his peculiar train of thought, and another to another, and this has produced a discrepancy, great in appearance, yet such that its elements, when separated and arranged, are found to present a complete and consistent body of truth. We are brought to conceive the largeness of the Great Master's view, not by preferring the ideas of some one disciple to those of the rest, but by combining, with here and there an exception, the discoveries of them all.

To reach a position from whence the whole field of this doctrine may be distinctly seen, it appears the best course to begin with inquiring, what is implied in the fact that "the Prince of this world is judged." It is because he is judged, our Lord says, that the Paraclete will reprove the world of judgment,—in other words, the spectacle of his actual doom is the present demonstration by which the Holy Ghost will convince mankind of other judgments prepared for him, and yet to come. We cannot,



therefore, adopt a better method for apprehending their nature, than that of considering carefully the *visible instance*, by which the Spirit of God has promised to make it plain.

As preliminary, then, to the investigation, it is needful to remark, that the term, judgment, is not used here in that comprehensive sense which includes the whole process of the Judge in declaring the law, and convicting the offender, as well as in passing the appropriate sentence. The Holy Spirit is spoken of already in the preceding context, as convincing the world of sin, and vindicating the righteousness of the Lawgiver. Now, therefore, he can only be understood as making manifest the punishment—denouncing the terrible retributions by which, under that righteous Lawgiver, sin shall be avenged.

The subject of them is “the Prince of this world,”—a title which brings into view not only his person but his dominion, and intimates that the judgment falls alike upon both. His nature as an apostate Spirit is well enough known to render any inquiry into his personal characteristics unnecessary in order to understand his fate; but if we would clearly perceive the manner in which the sentence affects his usurped authority, it is indispensable to investigate its character and its foundation.

I. And, first, it is a real and practical sovereignty. Its designations are not metaphorical but literal. Their own native force, in the connections where we find them placed, is sufficient to prove them so. “The Prince of this world is judged;” what need to give him such a title here if he were not a Prince indeed? Nay, would not the name, upon that supposition, have a tendency to mislead? The same word, *αρχων*, is applied by St. Paul to the Jewish High Priest, when he quotes from Exodus (xxii. 28) the command, “Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people” (Acts xxiii. 5); and just as in that same passage of the law such rulers are also called “gods,” so Satan is called by the Apostle “the God of this world,” (2 Cor. iv. 4); for of whom else

can it by way of eminence be said, that “he hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine into them?” Then the account given of this power expressly asserts its *reality*. “We wrestle not,” says the Scripture, “against flesh and blood, but against principalities—*αρχας*, against powers, *εξουσιας*—against the rulers of the darkness of this world—*τους κοσμοκρατορας του σκοτου*. So here are all the constituents of essential rule, *αρχη*, the initiative—the leadership in counsel and in action—*εξουσια*, the legal right, the warrant—and *κρατος*, the actual force, the effective strength of government (Eph. vi. 12).

II. Again, the sway of this terrible power is extended over a wide region, inclosing many varieties of being. Its local seat, as the Scripture seems plainly to intimate, is the atmosphere of our globe, or some adjoining province of nature; for Satan is designated “the Prince of the power of the air,”—*αρχων της εξουσιας του αερος*, (Eph. ii.)—and still more remarkably, the influences by which he contends with the people of God, are termed “spiritual wickedness in high places,”—*τα πνευματικα της πονηριας εν τοις επουρανιοις*. (Eph. vi. 12.) As *ουρανος*, Heaven, is often employed emblematically in Holy Writ to signify the sphere of authority and power, wherever it be, we might have doubted whether the conjugate term just quoted, *επουρανιος*, were not also to be *tropically* understood; but the mention, in a manner exactly parallel, of the air, which is nowhere a type, as holding the throne and centre of Satan’s dominion, seems here to fix a literal meaning on the heaven too, and thus doubles the testimony, that somewhere above our habitable earth, is pitched or moved as occasion may require, the camp and the tribunal of iniquity! Whatever may be the truth on this point, however, certain it is, at least, that the power tolerated in the hands of evil angels is presided over by one who is named “the Prince of the Devils,” (Matt. xii. 24.) Equally certain it is, that mankind in their

fallen state are guided by his subtilty, ruled by his authority, actuated, and in the end destroyed, by his malignant power. "The light which is in them is darkness,"—the only authority which they obey is of earth, not heaven—children of disobedience, Satan is the spirit that worketh in them. He hath the power of death—his name is *Ἀπολλύων*, the Destroyer." (Rev. ix. 11.) It follows necessarily as a consequence of his dominion over men, that whatever belongs to them in their condition as sinners, or is subject to them by the law of their nature, notwithstanding the fall, pertains virtually to him. For the boast made to Christ in the wilderness, however presumptuously urged, was not in one sense unfounded—"All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of these kingdoms, for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it." (Luke iv. 6.)

III. Is it then, thirdly,—is it without the Providence of God, or in spite of His power, that this hostile tyranny establishes itself within His realm? Assuredly not; for were it even possible to conceive it erected in such a manner, yet how could it stand for a day? No; though all perversity in itself, yet its basis rests upon the laws of eternal rectitude. The very principle of its strength and stability lies in this — that its whole system and structure is nothing else than the product of that abiding curse inflicted upon spiritual defection by the immutable justice of God. Under the influence, it would seem, of aspiring ambition and covetousness, a portion of the angels revolted. Division entered where all before had been unity. Within the beautiful domain of holiness, sin, disorder, and destruction, found their votaries. It was indispensable to pass upon them a sentence of expulsion and perpetual exile—leaving, however, their original faculties untouched—permitting the relations which sprung from these, whether between the rebels themselves or toward other beings, to take their natural course—that so the very powers which would have been bless-

edness in their legitimate use, might turn to misery in their perversion—and having wilfully refused to glorify free goodness and love, might stand a dreadful monument of penal severity.

Hence appears to have arisen, in the wisdom of God, that rule, which it is evident the evil angels exercise among themselves. The individual of their number, whose original greatness made him once pre-eminent for good,—exalted still as a fallen spirit among the fallen—unrivalled even among the potentates of hell for subtilty, strength, and malice,—exacts from the rest, as each of them does in his measure from others, not certainly the obedience of good will or good hope, but the servitude rather of hatred compelled by fear! Our present concern, however, is with his domination over man. How did that originate? He seduced him from his allegiance—he overthrew him by sin—he allied him to the interest and faction of the apostasy—he brought him within the compass of the malediction—he subjected him to the laws of Omnipotent wrath, laws rigorously, because righteously, executed. Dwelling now together in the same region and shadow of death, the stronger nature of course enthrals the weaker, deludes, oppresses, torments it, tramples it under foot;—does this no longer in that presumptuous and unauthorised boldness by which he first invaded the family of God and profaned the bowers of paradise, but in the power and warrant of that very curse which righteously dooms himself to everlasting sorrows. It is the justice of Heaven that fastens his burning throne upon the rock, that it may there become at last the engine of his fiercest torture.

Meantime, however, this tyranny over man is his boast and solace, and he holds it with desperate tenacity. When, therefore, he is in any manner or measure deprived of it, “then is the Prince of this world judged.” As our Lord uttered these words, the event was so near at hand, that He spoke of it as in the act of being accomplished, and within less than a day after this an-

nouncement was made, “He bore our sins in His own body on the tree!” Then, “through death, he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil, and delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” The righteous efficacy of His atonement in releasing His people from the domination of the wicked one,—the power of His grace in changing their character along with their condition,—the wonderful arrangement of His providence which turns the former thralls of Satan into formidable and resistless assailants of His empire,—instances, all of them, of the present and visible judgment which he undergoes,—are too large a subject to be at present more than suggested! Let us not, however, forget to rejoice in the Captain of our Salvation—the stronger than the strong man armed, who bound him and spoiled his goods. Let us give continual thanks to Him who divideth a portion with the great and divideth the spoil with the strong, only “because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” And let our assured trust be fixed upon His promises, as we receive His words when his Spirit reasons thus with his Israel. “Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?” But thus saith the Lord, “Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with Thee, and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress Thee with their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own blood as with sweet wine; and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer the mighty one of Jacob.” Amen.

## LECTURE XVIII.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT REPROVES THE WORLD OF JUDGMENT.

SIN, Righteousness, and Judgment, are the three things of which the Holy Spirit since his coming hath reproved the world. The sin, begun no doubt with the apostasy of Adam, but consummated in the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ, is chargeable primarily upon "the God of this world, the Prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience." The righteousness is that of God in sending His Son into the world, and receiving Him up into glory, after he had not only maintained his own integrity perfect, but accomplished a vicarious obedience available for the justification of the ungodly that should believe on Him. The judgment is the result of the opposition between these two. It lies in the shock and collision of the sin and the righteousness. In the one consists the kingdom of the arch-usurper and arch-enemy. In the other is laid up that power and provision of spiritual warfare that goes forth to smite the fabric of wickedness at its foundations, and overwhelm the builder in the ruins.

It is a remarkable fact that the first hope of deliverance to man after the fall was wrapped up in the threatening against his enemy. The curse which doomed the serpent to destruction, conveyed the blessing by which his victim was to be saved "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt



bruise his heel." (Gen. iii. 15.) The reason is obvious. God, according to his own original nature, overflowed in good will and beneficence to man, so long as the channels of love lay open. But by the success of the tempter in his enterprise, these were quite obstructed. Sin, in offending justice, awakening wrath, bringing down the curse, left room for nothing but severities to pass from the Creator to the creature. It followed that if favour were ever to resume its course, the very first of its efforts must be directed to remove the obstacles, and to re-open the ancient avenues of blessing. But this is just, in other words, to undo all that the wicked one had done. "It is," as the Apostle John expresses it, "to destroy the works of the devil." No wonder, therefore, if, as in the first announcement, so also in the execution, the judgment prepared for the Prince of this world should be found to consist, as to its principles and main operations, in nothing else than the deliverance wrought in Christ Jesus for the people of God.

What advantage the author of evil, cut off as he is from all good hope, can propose to himself from exercising such a destructive tyranny over mankind, it may be difficult for us to conceive. The experience of our own nature, indeed, supplies but too sufficient evidence, that, to gratify the lust of power, to satiate the cravings of revenge, to glut the rage of cruelty, are means of producing, in certain minds, an horrible kind of enjoyment. Of this the fallen angel may be capable—it may, perhaps, be the only shadow of pleasure that remains to him. Or, as we know it to be the case with corrupt and abandoned men—successes not worth pursuing for any positive satisfaction which they yield, may yet be intensely longed for by him, as a respite, however brief, from intolerable vacuity and wretchedness. Certain it is—let us apprehend the matter as we may—that dominion is his pride, that sinners are his prey, and that the work of his incessant activity and tremendous energies, is destruction.

Despoil him of these things, and how abject and miserable soever his present condition, he is yet more deeply degraded, more utterly undone; he sinks into a bottomless gulf of shame and woe. He, therefore, who was manifested to redeem the captives of Satan from destruction, is spoken of as by the very same means destroying Satan himself. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, Christ also himself likewise took part of the same, that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14. 15.)

The manner in which this two-fold achievement is effected, we find very fully set forth in a remarkable passage of the Epistle to the Colossians (ii. 9—15). There Paul applies himself to fortify the Christians of Colosse against the false reasonings of those, on the one side, who would draw them, being Gentiles, into legal bondage under the Mosaic ceremonies (ver. 16), "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days"—that is, the peculiar Jewish Sabbath;—and of those on the other side, who would (ii. 8) "spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ;" persuading them to use the Gnostic austerities, "Touch not, taste not, handle not" (ver. 21); and to practise (ver. 18) "a voluntary humility and the worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which they had not seen, vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind." For effectual security against such dangerous extravagancies, he exhorts them, as they had received the Lord Jesus Christ, so to walk in Him; "For in Him," says the Apostle, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him which is the head of all principality and power." Accordingly, he goes on to say, that whatever ad-

vantages the Jew could promise them through circumcision (Rom. iv. 12—ii. 25), or the philosopher through bodily mortifications and will-worship, these were all imparted not delusively, but in reality by their baptism into Christ. Of course, he means (Rom. vi. 3) not the baptism of water merely, but the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, which, uniting them by faith to the Lord Jesus, caused them to die, in Him, a death which made atonement for all their sins; and to rise, in Him, with that resurrection unto newness of life, through which they should thenceforth be enabled to live unto God. Then, after expressing the benefits of both justification and regeneration in the following words, “And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven your trespasses,” at last he declares what acts of saving power they were that originated and secured this entire deliverance—what the foundations are upon which our whole salvation rests, and by understanding which the whole becomes intelligible. “Blotting out,” says he, in continuation, “the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” Here is expounded the whole mystery of the way in which the Prince of this world is judged; and the instruction, as you perceive, has two branches.

1. The first relates to what the Apostle calls “the handwriting of ordinances”—*χειρογραφον τοις δογμασιν*. By this it is sufficiently plain, that he means, directly, and in the first instance, the ceremonial law of Moses. For in the 2d chap. of his Epistle to the Ephesians, when declaring the union of Jews and Gentiles into one Church under the Gospel, he says, that the middle wall of partition which had before divided them, the enmity which had kept them separated, was just “the law of

commandments contained in ordinances," *τον νομον των εντολων εν δογμασι*. What he so designates there, is, without all question, the ceremonial law, immediately at least, and specially; since whatever distinguishing effect the moral law might have produced by its Divine purity, yet this regular system of positive ordinances and institutions superadded to it, was the provision expressly made for keeping Israel a distinct people, and the means by which, in fact, that object was mainly accomplished. But Christ, he adds, "broke down this middle wall of partition, slew this enmity by the Cross, abolished in his flesh this law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain one new man, that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross." All this is so closely parallel to the words of his Epistle to the Colossians,—*"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his Cross;"* that since the "ordinances" clearly mean the ceremonial law in the one case, they cannot but be so understood in the other. The conclusion is strengthened by the fact, that it is a part of the Apostle's immediate design to prevent the Colossian church from adopting Jewish observances. Nor is his reasoning without force against the ascetism of the Oriental philosophy too; for if a ceremonial of Divine appointment was abolished as of no further use under the grace of the Gospel and the fulness of Christ, still more unnecessary must it be to remain in subjection to the rudiments of the world, the traditions of time, the mere commandments and doctrines of men.

More, however, must be meant by this "law of commandments," this "handwriting of ordinances," than simply the positive and ritual part of the Mosaic code. It is true, the ordinances of that description all testified of sin,—circumcision of original corruption,—the divers washings of spiritual pollution,—the bloody sacrifices of mortal guilt,—and the repeal of them

all, was consequently a testimony that both the power and penalty of sin were now done away. But no information is thus given as to the means by which their removal was effected. Disannulling the ceremonial law might, indeed, permit Jew and Gentile at Ephesus to unite with each other, but could not reconcile both unto God. It might allow either class of converts to dwell in peace with the other at Colosse, but could not present them all, holy, and unblamable, and unreprouvable in the sight of God. (Col. i. 22.) No; the barrier interposed by the moral law must also be removed before such an end can be attained, and, therefore, reference must be made, in some important sense, to the moral law, where the Apostle makes mention of a hand-writing of ordinances that was taken out of the way.

Did Christ come to destroy the moral law? God forbid! "He came not to destroy but to fulfil." (Matt. v. 17.) Nevertheless it is by that very law, as a covenant of works, that sinners are slain; nor can they live again until its curse be removed. Hear from the Apostle how this matter is to be received. (Rom. vii. 5.) "When we were in the flesh the motions of sin which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death; but now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid! Nay, I had not known sin but by the law, for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; and the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death; for sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good. Was, then, that

which is good made death unto me? God forbid! but sin [was made death unto me,] that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good—that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.” Nothing is clearer, according to the testimony of these Scriptures, than that the moral law, distinctly quoted in them, if considered as a rule of duty, is of immutable rectitude, and of eternal obligation. Paul, in this view, does not make void the law, yea, he establishes the law; teaching that we are to serve God, not in the oldness of its letter, but in the newness of its spirit—that is to say, not under the constraint of its threatenings, but in the fervour of a loving and thankful heart, regenerated by the Holy Spirit. But regard the same law under another aspect, consider it as the arbiter of life or death, awarding life only to a faultless universal obedience, but death to every single trespass,—place it in this light—and nothing is clearer, on the other side, than that as by the terms of it no sinner can escape destruction while it is in force, so by the cross of Christ, its condemning power is wholly abolished to His people. His vicarious death exempts them from the death which under the law they had merited no less than others. The law, Paul tells us, is dead in so far as it bound them over to punishment; and they are as free from its doom, as a woman whose husband is dead (for that is the illustration he uses) is free from the obligations of marriage.

Understanding, then, “the handwriting of ordinances” in the largest sense, as embracing both the moral and the positive, we shall easily see, by Paul’s own instruction, how he wished his doctrine regarding it to be apprehended by the Colossians. The positive, being abolished absolutely, could no longer prove either an occasion or a witness of sin. The moral, which is love, while established preceptively as the bond of perfectness, the royal law of liberty, the keeping of which is itself a great reward,—nay,



while fulfilled in all its provisions, both precept and sanction, by the obedience and death, and exaltation of the Lord, being yet *relatively* annulled—annulled as to its penal sentence and award against those for whom Christ died—can no longer constitute them children of wrath in the sight of God. As to every thing, therefore, that could bring believers under subjection to death, or keep them there, the whole handwriting is “blotted out.” Its fiery characters all obliterated, the scroll is reduced to a blank. Whatever witnessed “against us,” whatever determined “contrary to us,” whatever prohibited our access to the hope of life, among all its provisions, was “taken out of the way.” Unrolled at first in full terror before the eyes of Christ as he hung upon the tree,—exactng one by one from the Surety the penalties due by the debtors,—its written requirements were successively washed out, each by the blood which itself demanded to be shed, until the force of the whole being exhausted, its decisions all obsolete, and its original significance all gone, the Lord, thus released at length from its power, made prize of the faded record of wrath and malediction, and nailed it in his own stead to the cross, a memorial of his love, a signal of his victory.

But now, to suggest, in one word at the close, the bearing which this great transaction had upon the judgment of Satan, it is evident that the violated law, the handwriting of our guilt and doom, was also the charter of his principality, the constituting statute of his kingdom. It furnished all the grounds of accusations through which alone he could claim us as his subjects. It pronounced and sanctioned all the pains, by which alone he could exercise over us his destructive power. Death has no sting but sin, and sin has neither substance nor strength without law. Let the rights of law be fully satisfied, so that in its exacting and condemning power it becomes a dead letter, and then sin is neutralized, and death abolished. Then the Re-

deemer can demand in triumph, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” And the foe has nothing to answer. His title is annulled, his sceptre is broken, his royalty is stripped off, he is dragged away a chained captive. This is the *second* part of his punishment, to be considered afterwards. It is described by the Apostle in these words:—“Having spoiled principalities and powers, Christ made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in the cross.”

## LECTURE XIX.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT REPROVES THE WORLD OF JUDGMENT.

THE moral distinctions of right and wrong, good and evil, are held by the wisest men, as well as by the best divines, to be founded in the very nature of things. Like the relations of numbers or geometrical quantities, they are necessary and immutable. The law of God, whether written in the heart or in the Scriptures, is nothing else than the application by Divine wisdom and authority, of the true principles of rectitude to the condition of his creatures—an announcement of what, in his unerring view, the maxims of eternal righteousness require at their hands, considering the nature he has given them, and the circumstances in which he has placed them. And the sanctions of law,—reward and punishment, are of equal necessity, upon the great scale, with the rules of law. It became the sovereign goodness and bountiful loving-kindness of God, though free from all external obligation, and incapable by nature of being brought into debt by any, yet of its own accord to attach its benefits to willing obedience, and make the enjoyment of them secure by a free pledge. The penalty of wickedness is of another character. It is merited in the strictest sense. That poverty of created beings, which can never enrich God by giving more, may rob Him by giving less than is His own; not that He needs it, or is not perfectly blessed without it, but that it belongs to Him. Justice, therefore, is called to exercise her function here. Equity

fails, if the crime goes unrequited. Wrong is done if the claims of truth and love are trampled under foot, and the aggressor finds no harm. Hence the law which, fulfilled, is light and life, turns into the very shadow of Death when violated. Once within the compass of its doom, the sinner must, for aught that himself can do, lie down in sorrow, without remedy, without respite, without hope. And for this reason it was that Christ, after He had graciously assumed the character of our Surety, while, by His suffering obedience, He for ever established the law as a rule of righteousness, and a pledge of reward, did, notwithstanding, by the very same means,—His obedient sufferings,—“ blot out the law, as an handwriting of guilt and condemnation that was against us, which was contrary unto us, and take it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.”

It was by this great achievement, viewed in itself and in its immediate consequences, “He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the Devil.” By this He judged the Prince of this world; and the judgment affects both his Principality and his Person.

But we shall advert to it only as it affects his Principality; and this chiefly, of course, in its bearing upon that portion of mankind whom Christ has redeemed with his blood. So far as they are concerned, Its right is annulled,—Its power is overcome,—Its effects are abolished.

I. Its right is annulled. The endurance of the curse by our Redeemer, through which He satisfied the law for our sins, and so exhausted its condemning power, removed the whole *ground* of Satan’s dominion over us. If, as an angel of exalted place and dignity, he ever possessed a delegated authority over inferior natures in a holy state, that must have been entirely forfeited by his revolt; nor, while they stood firm in innocency, could his greater strength or subtilty be suffered to enthrall them. His only prospect of empire lay in seducing them to

sin. Successful in that as regards mankind, he brought them under the curse, when, like himself, divested of all favour and protection from God, then human frailty must quail in the presence of angelic power and wickedness; nay, when effect must be given to the sentence of eternal justice itself, that the demon, before whose suggestions their first righteousness criminally gave way, should now be suffered to domineer at will over their corruption; so the act which expels us from God, is that which constitutes us Satan's subjects. The written sentence of our destruction is the patent of his royalty. The decree which adjusts and proportions our punishment to our trespass, is the very same which constructs and perpetuates his kingdom. Obliterate this handwriting, as our Saviour's blood has done, and his charter is a blank, his title is nullified, the fruits of his victory are done away. He is a conqueror defeated, an usurper dethroned, a rival of the Divine Sovereignty over man thrust down from his presumptuous eminence to degradation and darkness. The Lord Jesus knew that such would be the instant consequence of His finishing our redemption from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us; and, therefore, when "the seventy returned again to Him with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name," He announced the coming event as if it were already past. He said unto them, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." (Luke x. 17, 18.)

II. The *rights* of Satan's principality being annulled, it follows, of course, that its *power* is overcome. As that was first exerted in perverting man, so its working continues in keeping him perverse, and in enlarging his wickedness to the full extent of his capacity. To blind and delude his understanding—to harden and debase his heart—to stimulate within him all proud and covetous, all malignant, all beastly passions—to make every man a son of Belial, a Cain, a Herod, a Judas—to make the

whole earth a Babylon for ambition, an Egypt for cruelty, a Tyre for avarice, a Sodom for pollution—and all this by turning the thoughts of men away from God to idols, and exasperating their hatred against His holiness, and deadening their consciences to the demands of righteousness and the certainty of a judgment to come—these are the works which employ the legions of spiritual wickedness in high places, while combining their strength in one organized and sustained effort with that of their prince, the spirit that *now* worketh in the children of disobedience.

Against this mighty power of evil, even Adam, in his uprightness, much more his fallen posterity, was found utterly unable to contend. No son of man, though even a saint, had ever been exposed to its assaults, without contracting both sin and guilt by the encounter. But now a champion, born of woman, made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and put in trust with our deliverance, engages, face to face, and hand to hand, with the potentate of darkness. The field of conflict is the Cross. Deserted of all human aids, and torn by the rage of all human cruelty, this MAN, who before had baffled every subtilty and resisted every allurements of the Devil, now sustains, without shrinking, and especially without sinning, the onset of his excited and concentrated fury. The gates of hell burst open upon the child of flesh and blood, but they cannot prevail against him. Nay, though he lies under that awful curse, its force as yet unexhausted, by which the command of all other men was made sure to the destroyer—though it is the very hour and power of darkness—(Luke, xxii. 53)—the privileged moment, the decisive conjuncture, when hell is permitted to do its utmost for perpetuating, through the second Adam, this very curse which had been incurred through the first; yet the Saviour, crucified and in agony, withstands the enemy, wrestles thus against the strength of all enemies in one; and at last, by dying sinless in



his hands, overthrows him ! Then Satan feels his power broken. Sin and holiness having once for all joined battle, a Man overcomes the wicked one. The very weakness of sanctified humanity—its power of sorrowing, suffering, dying holily—proves an overmatch for the violence and might of sinning angels. The seed of deluded Eve, even with his bruised heel, crushes the head of the serpent. And thus, again, in the trampling under foot, by an individual of our fallen race, of his power to tempt and to corrupt, “The Prince of this world is judged,”—experimental proof is given him beforehand of defeat and discomfiture yet to come.

III. The right of Satan’s dominion being annulled, and its power vanquished by the cross, still its *effects* seemed unremovable while Christ continued a prey to death, and an inmate of the tomb. But when the Lord had revived and risen again, a third infliction of judgment was made manifest in the commencement of a reversal, to what extent soever the Saviour pleased, of the destruction and misery which the malice of Satan had wrought. Doubtless it was by an act of His own will that Jesus yielded up the ghost ; but it is true, notwithstanding, that “by wicked hands he was crucified and slain.” Passing as a conqueror from the field, He still left behind the wrecks of battle ; and as long as His soul remained disembodied, though in Paradise, and His corpse, though incorruptible, lay buried, so long the enmity of the Devil against Him was not wholly frustrated. His enemy’s right had expired, his power had been broken, but the consequences of their exertion continued. The causes had ceased to operate, but their most astounding effects were still visible in the very person of the Son of God. Once more, therefore, **THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD MUST BE JUDGED.** He that had power to lay down His life showed that He had power to take it again. (John x. 17.) Having first destroyed the title, and next the power *of sin* in the flesh, now He begins to

abolish death also ; and in an instance, glorious above all others, brings life and immortality to light. Then did Satan see the last remnant of his workmanship ready to be annihilated, when the Lord ratified by one mighty deed what he had threatened of old by the mouth of his Prophet :—" O death ! I will be thy plagues ; O grave ! I will be thy destruction." (Hos. xiii. 14.)

By these three fatal blows then was executed that judgment of Satan through the death of our Lord, which we have been so largely considering. Their joint importance will be the better appreciated if we reflect for a moment what the consequences must have been if any one of them had come short of its aim. Had the Saviour's obedience, in its aspect of suffering for sin, failed to make a true and perfect atonement, then Satan would by the law have retained his right ; and his power, in that case, could not justly have been assailed. Had the sufferings of our Lord, in the aspect of a temptation to disobedience, prevailed with him even in the slightest degree ;—Had He not wholly baffled the corrupting wiles and strength of the tempter by a perfect fulfilment of all righteousness, then His atonement must have lost all its value. Or could both these have been adequate while yet the power was wanting to undo and to reverse the woe, the sorrow, the desolation, and the shadow of death which the wicked one had created, then the accomplishment of both would have, in a great measure, been fruitless and unavailing. But by the completion of all the three together, despite the adversary's extremest strugglings, a judgment was executed on the spot, which virtually implied, in the sequel, an utter and everlasting destruction. The curse of the law, that written instrument of his prerogative, being wrested from his hands and made to adorn the trophy of his defeat—his power of temptation, the right arm of all his victories being broken by a Son of vanquished Adam,—and the chiefest minister of his cruelty, death, when he had first been employed to smite his Master, being

himself swallowed up of life,—all this being performed in the sight of angels and men, with counsel that turned weakness into strength, and curse into blessing, and shame into glory—the Lord did indeed give cause for that joyful boast of His Servant which, you are aware, we have all along had in view, “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary unto us, He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross, and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made an example and a show of them openly, *ἰδειγμάτων*, triumphing over them in it.”

Now, because the Prince of this world was thus judged, the Holy Ghost the Comforter, ever since His coming on the day of Pentecost, turning the eyes of mankind to the transactions of Calvary, has been reproving the world of judgment, even as the Lord foretold. “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil.” (1 John iii. 8.) Doing all things for our redemption, every wound which, by the cross, He inflicted upon the adversary, was so much deliverance wrought for the elect people of God; and, on the other side, every deliverance enjoyed by them, enlarges and inflames the wound under which the adversary writhes.

1. So, first, the penal suffering by which the Lord, as willingly bound over to obedience, made satisfaction to the law, exempts *us* from wrath,—as many as believe on Him,—constitutes us by imputation righteous, rescues us from the accuser’s obloquy,—from the terrible jurisdiction and despotism of hell,—from the dungeon, and fetters, and scourges of the great destroyer. To the confusion of his policy, and defeat of all his hope, he sees daily that astounding sight,—a just God justifying the ungodly—a holy God accepting sinners as dear children, drawing away at pleasure the liege subjects of his kingdom, and yet doing him no wrong. Bitter torment this to the king of rage and hate, that the lawful captives should be delivered from

his hand, and yet no room be left even for the lips of blasphemy to complain! Then the pride and boast of his dominion over those that are left him is quite evacuated and brought low. The merits which redeemed so many could also, if so it had seemed good in the sight of God, have redeemed the whole. It is not by power then that He reigns over any, it is but by sufferance. Contempt, not helplessness, abandons them to his sway—contempt, or rather justice, that may one day make his thralls his tormentors also, turning his mischief upon his own head.

2. Again, all those who in this manner escape from his dominion, are at the same time set free from his practical influences. As Christ upon the Cross, by the power of the Holy Spirit, maintained His human purity unstained, in the face of all temptation, so shall every one of His redeemed, through the mighty operation of that same Spirit, have the principle of corruption slain within him, and, putting on the whole armour of God, shall be enabled, even in sinful flesh, to fight a good fight, striving against sin, and so to resist the devil, that he shall flee from him. Nor shall the efforts of his former subjects be limited to self-defence merely. They shall become, under their heavenly Leader, the bold invaders of his kingdom. All of them as witnesses of righteousness by word and deed, and many as ministers of the word and ambassadors of light to them that sit in darkness, shall make successful inroads upon his defenced frontiers, and lay his strongholds level with the ground, till by their means his empire on earth shall at length be utterly subverted, “and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him,” (Dan. vii. 27.)—awaiting the time when the victory of His own holiness on the Cross shall issue in the perfect holiness of His people, in that land “Where there shall in no wise enter

any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie;" (Rev. xxi. 27,) and where He and they shall reign in glory for ever and ever, while the enemy and the avenger shall be far away.

3. And *that*, in the last place, shall be brought to pass, when with the dead body of Him who rose from the grave on the third day, the dead bodies of His saints also shall arise. Circumstances forbid me to enter upon this subject farther than to remind you that Christ was Himself the first fruits from the dead, to give His adversary proof, and His people assurance that the full harvest of reviving life should follow. If, indeed, there be some that shall never taste of death, it is not that they should be cut off from the blessings of the resurrection, which shall extend to all the redeemed without exception, in order quite to destroy him that hath the power of death. "Behold, I show you a mystery," saith the Apostle; "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality; then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." This is the point at which all the lines of judgment meet. Here the right, the power, the work of the Prince of this world are finally brought to nothing. If, whilst the righteous rise to the resurrection of life, they that have done evil also rise to the resurrection of damnation, it is not by the superior might of Satan, but for his deeper punishment. And as the judgments which destroy his kingdom are consummated here, so also are the miseries that besiege his person. For now the pride and covetousness of that ambitious and insatiable angel who kept not his first estate, but left his

own habitation, and fallen into sin himself, could not rest until he had perverted others, shall receive that unknown amount of merited and appropriate punishment which was announced to him of old,—“Because thou hast done this thou art cursed above every beast of the field, upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life,”—even through the dark eternity that is before thee.



## LECTURE XX.

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### JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

OF all the perversities incident to fallen man, none cleaves more obstinately than that which is least suited to his condition, self-righteousness. This phenomenon, strange as it is, appears not difficult to be accounted for. We were created holy, and the work of holiness was constituted our original title to eternal life. Corrupt and apostate as we now are, there is still hope left us of reconciliation with God, conscience still testifies that obedience is our duty, and we hurry to the conclusion that therefore it is by obedience, and only by obedience, that we can be reconciled. True, the Son of God is sent from Heaven to be our Mediator and Redeemer; but how, unless by a righteous conduct, are we to gain an interest in his favour? Is it by simply accepting his salvation, without any strenuous efforts being first made in the way of deserving it? The man who shall say so in the hearing of such as have no better instructor than natural conscience, will either instantly be pitied as under miserable delusion, or cried out against as at heart an enemy of all righteousness.

It was not alone under the first and more imperfect dispensation, that Pharisaic self-reliance hoped for acceptance by this channel. Christianity, as transmuted into its most anti-Christian form, points out the path to heaven, through the mediation of Christ, indeed, but by the condign merits of our own good deeds. The Reformation, wheresoever it reached, *did* certainly

bring down this presumption, by proclaiming from the Word of God, that sinners are justified by faith only. But its progress was soon checked, and within its own bosom teachers soon arose, whose unguarded or unsanctified hearts, beneath the very sunshine of truth, admitted those minute, almost impalpable, germs of self-righteous fallacy, which finding a congenial soil in human pride, sprung up with such rank luxuriance as every where almost to choke the good seed, and render it unfruitful.

To adduce in illustration of this, not the earliest, nor by any means the grossest corruption of the reformed doctrine, but rather that which diverged so little, that unpractised eyes could scarcely see the difference, let us quote as an instance a certain statement of Arminius, (*Declaratio Sententiæ*, D. Jac Arminii, Pag. 102, oper. Francf., 1635.) “A question is mooted,” he says, “concerning the words of the Apostle Paul to the Romans, ch. iv., namely these, ‘faith was counted for righteousness,’—a question whether these should be understood in a proper sense, so that *faith itself*, as an act performed according to *the Gospel commandment*, were counted before God, for, or toward righteousness, and that of grace, as it is not in itself the righteousness of the law; or whether they (the words) should be understood thus, that the righteousness of Christ, apprehended by faith, is counted to us for righteousness—understood, that is, in a figurative and improper sense:—or whether, once more, they should be thus understood, that the righteousness unto which, or into which faith is counted, is the instrumental work of faith as some assert.” (The expression is obscure: I suppose it means the good works that spring from faith.) “For my part,” he continues, “I have followed the first of these opinions on occasion of the Theses on Justification, discussed before me,” (he was Professor of Divinity at Leyden,) “not exactly, however, but explicitly and fully in a certain letter. For this reason I am held to teach error respecting the justification of a man before

God.” . . . . Then, after alluding to an expected conference, he adds, “Meantime I say, briefly, that I believe sinners are constituted righteous by the obedience of Christ alone; and that the righteousness of Christ is the only meritorious cause on account of which God forgives believers their sins and regards them as righteous, no otherwise than if they had perfectly fulfilled the law. But since God imputes the righteousness of Christ to none but believers, I hold that in this sense it may truly and properly be said, that faith is of grace counted to the believer for righteousness—in respect that Christ is set forth as a propitiation, or mercy-seat, through faith in His blood.” And then he concludes by declaring his readiness to subscribe every word that Calvin had written on Justification in the third book of his *Institutes*, which is expressly devoted to the subject.

At first sight, what can appear more satisfactory than this? Let us, however, carefully advert to two things,—

1st, That it is the *act* of faith itself, which in Arminius’s view is counted for righteousness; and,

2d, That it is so counted expressly, as it is an act of obedience to a commandment—a Gospel commandment, no doubt, but still a commandment. How much these positions import, especially the latter of them, will appear immediately.

Arminius died in the year 1609, and the peculiar opinions of which, though not the author, he was the champion, made such progress, and created such division in the Church, that to restore harmony, the Synod of Dort was assembled in 1618. On the point in question its decision was as follows:—“The Synod rejects the error of those who teach that the new covenant of grace which God the Father made with men, through the intervention of the death of Christ, does not consist in this, namely, that we are justified before God, and saved by faith, considered merely as it apprehends the merit of Christ; but in this, that

God, abrogating the requirement of a perfect legal obedience, substitutes faith itself, and the imperfect obedience of faith, for the perfect obedience of the law; and deems them worthy, through grace, of the reward of eternal life." (*Acta Syn. Dordr. Pars. I. Pag. 295.*) This statement, while strongly put, undoubtedly contains a true account of the system which it condemns. It was given forth by the Synod as the result of long and careful discussions with the Arminian party,—the Remonstrants; and if, perhaps, it might have been complained of by Arminius himself, had he been still alive, as an exaggerated and extreme view of his opinion, yet, certainly, it does nothing more than broadly declare to what his doctrine necessarily tended, and what it did actually become, in the hands of his disciples.

I do not find that the English divines attending the Synod, and concurring in its orthodox decisions, although the Scottish minister, Balcanquhal (the younger of the name), was associated with them, laboured this particular point very earnestly. At all events, it is certain that Arminian notions continued afterwards to gain ground in England, so that, in 1699, when Bishop Burnet published his *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, he made no scruple of presenting this very account of the gospel salvation as at once the most rational and most Scriptural. After a good deal of guarded and plausible statements, differing very sensibly from the decided tone of the article upon which he is commenting, he thus winds up his *Exposition*:—"Our faith and repentance are not the valuable considerations for which God pardons and justifies; that is done merely for the death of Christ; which God having out of the riches of his grace provided for us, and offered for us, justification is on those accounts said to be free, there being nothing on our part which either did, or could have procured it. But, still our faith, which includes our hope, our love, our repentance, and our obedience,

is the condition that makes us capable of receiving the benefits of this redemption and free grace. And thus, it is clear in what sense we believe that we are justified both freely, and yet through Christ; and also through faith, as the condition absolutely necessary on our part."

Here it will easily be remarked that justifying faith, as such, is not only considered itself a work of obedience, but is defined as comprising, under its proper name and nature, the entire substance of Gospel obedience both in principle and practice. And what is more especially to be noted, faith in the stricter sense, as distinguished from love, repentance, and the rest, is treated of as no less an inherent qualification for receiving the righteousness of Christ, than love is for enjoying His fellowship. Regarded as a branch of our own personal obedience, it is an essential part of the condition that "*makes us capable* of receiving the benefits of this redemption and free grace." The Bishop, therefore, to use the language of the Synod of Dort, does not teach "that we are justified before God and saved by faith, considered merely as it takes hold of the merit of Christ;" but he does teach that God has constituted "faith itself, and the imperfect obedience of faith," as the title to eternal life through Christ, just as a perfect obedience was the title to eternal life under the law. How far this tenet is chargeable with "abrogating the requirement of a perfect legal obedience, and substituting an imperfect in its stead," will be matter of inquiry afterwards.

It is scarcely possible to conceive a more striking proof of the seducing nature of this theory than the fact, that it captivated the humble and holy Richard Baxter. With the boldness of an honest delusion, scorning the caution of Burnet and Arminius, he states and defends the error in its full-grown dimensions. "He must have a two-fold righteousness answerable to the two covenants, that expecteth to be justified:" this

is his language in his Aphorisms. And, in maintaining this opinion against the solid and friendly objections of Dr. Cartwright, his argument is, that, when there are two distinct laws, two distinct lawgivers and judges, two accusations, two sentences, two punishments, two titles to reward, there must of necessity be two righteousnesses. One may see, at a glance, how questionable are his premises, and therefore how insecure is the inference. In truth, this godly man, with an understanding by nature extremely acute and inquisitive, had intensely studied the scholastic divines, until all his modes of thinking had evidently become so infected with their metaphysical subtilities, that at length the open and simple scheme of the Gospel was fairly wrought out of his mind by them, long after it had taken immoveable possession of his heart. An instance like his may well suggest the forbearance due to men of similar character, and teach us to admire and love their graces, without approving their misconceptions.

I know not if the startling distinctness with which Baxter's writings brought into view the strange exigencies of this system, had the effect of teaching its advocates among the English Dissenters, and in the Scottish Establishment, to reassume the caution of their earlier predecessors. It is, however, certain that many among them, in more recent times, have propounded it, both clearly and circumspectly. In a volume of able sermons by Barker, I believe, an English dissenting minister, published in London in the year 1748, there presents itself, as you will perceive by the following extract, a singular proof with what effectual dexterity it is possible, if we have ignorance and simplicity for our hearers, to inform the ear that sinners are justified through Christ, by faith, and not by works, while we satisfy the heart that they are justified by works and not by faith. "Now faith," says Mr Barker, "in the original and primary signification of the word, is nothing more than the assent of the



mind to the truth of a proposition, upon reasonable evidence; and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ in this sense, is the mind's being persuaded of the truth of what is related and declared by Him and of Him in the Gospel. But the faith generally meant in the Scriptures, and which is connected with eternal life, and said to be the fruit of the Spirit, is something more than a mere faith of assent, and is made to include those right affections, and good dispositions of mind which a conviction and belief of such truths might reasonably be expected to produce; and when it does not produce them, the Scripture calls it a dead faith. So the Apostle James declares that faith without works is dead. "Was not our father Abraham," says he, "justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" Now, the phrase *works*, is manifestly used here in the same sense as justifying *faith* is in other places; for what works were they by which Abraham was justified? Did he actually offer up his son? No! he only, in consequence of his being convinced that God had commanded him to offer up his son, showed a readiness of mind to conform to the Divine will, which good disposition, considered in its principle, might be called faith, or in its effect works; and accordingly the Apostle Paul says that "Abraham's faith was imputed unto him for righteousness." Did this shrewd man, then, not understand that the preparations of Abraham, before reaching Mount Moriah, and his operations there, were works in the strictest sense, as well as works of the extremest pain and self-denial? Did he not know that nothing but a voice from heaven arrested the patriarch's hand when armed to strike the mortal blow? And had he not read that, in God's own account, Abraham had not withheld his son, his only son, from Him? Alas! Does the spell of religious error really bewitch intelligent men to think that the Spirit of God, in the Scripture, employs such utter confusion of words and ideas, as the common sense of an uninspired author

could not tolerate? Or is it that they learn to walk in craftiness, and to handle the word of God deceitfully?

It is not without some touch of regret and sorrow that, in tracing the history of a perversion like this, one is compelled to make mention of the sensible and learned, but unsound divines, and dangerous guides of our own country, and almost our own times. But they are precisely the persons against whose influence it is most needful to guard ourselves; and, therefore, it may be well to exhibit now, in its most considerate and approved form, the Arminianism of the moderate party in the Church of Scotland, as delineated in the writings of a well-known commentator who flourished towards the close of the last century.

In his commentary upon the Epistle to the Romans (ch. ii. 161, View.) after quoting the words of Paul, God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel, (ch. ii. 16) Macknight remarks, that "here the Apostle has taught us two things of great importance. The first is, that in judging men, God will not proceed according to the tenor either of the law of nature or of the law of Moses, by inquiring after obedience absolutely perfect; because, according to that mode of judgment, no one could be acquitted. *But He will judge their hidden things*, their inward frame of mind, *according to the Gospel*; that is, He will examine whether in the present life men have been guided by a sincere desire to know and to do His will in whatever manner it was manifested to them. And in whomsoever *such a faith* is found, he will count it for righteousness, and reward it, whether the person who possessed it were a Gentile, a Jew, or a Christian. The second thing taught in this declaration is, that wicked men of all nations shall be punished according to the demerit of their sins; while the righteous shall be rewarded, not on account of the merit of their good works, but through the mere favour of God, who, for the sake of Christ, will accept their spirit of faith as if it were a perfect righteousness."

These, then, in the commentator's view, are the grounds on which the final judgment shall proceed. Thus it is, that God is just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus; or according to his paraphrase of the words, Rom. iii. 26, that God will appear to be just, when acquitting him who is a performer of the faith enjoined by Jesus.

On this system it is sufficiently plain, that faith justifies, not simply as appropriating the merits of Christ, but expressly as it is a work, "a performance." Lest any doubt should remain upon the point, however, he is careful to illustrate his meaning by the example of Abraham. In his remarks upon the 3d of Galatians, he gives this exposition:—"Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness,—that is, it was considered by God as an action eminently righteous, *and, on that account*, he rewarded Abraham as a righteous person." And a little after,—*"it (his faith) was accepted of God instead of that perfect obedience which Abraham owed to the law of God, and was rewarded as if it had been a perfect righteousness."*

"How, then," an objector might ask, "is not this, after all, to attribute Abraham's salvation to his good deserving." No, says the expositor, instantly referring to the acceptance first, and also to the reward of this imperfect righteousness, "both are by a pure act of God's grace." And elsewhere, he labours the point as it were in argument against some who maintained the contrary. "Many have argued, that in the affair of justification, men's faith only is regarded," (he is explaining the words, Rom. iii. 28, justified by faith without the deeds of the law), "and no regard whatever is had to their works, as if they attributed men's justification" (mark the imputation,) "to some efficacy in faith which is not in works. This, however, hath no foundation in Scripture. For while it teaches that men are *justified by faith without works of law*, it teacheth at the same time, that men are *justified freely through God's grace*; consequently, it excludes faith

equally with works from any meritorious efficacy in the matter. And with respect to *instrumentality*, faith cannot be thought more necessary for preparing us to receive grace than works, seeing in that light *faith* is itself the greatest of all good works, being the principle from which every good work proceeds."

It surely needs no more than a passing remark, to vindicate evangelical expositors from the charge of either ascribing the justifying power of faith to its merit, or considering it through its intrinsic goodness a preparation for receiving grace.

Some difficulty still however hangs like a cloud over this theory. Since faith is accounted righteousness for its own moral worth, and yet is so accounted by a pure act of grace, is there any kind of righteousness, actual, or even imaginable, that can be accepted as righteousness, otherwise than of pure grace? "Yes," says our author, (Rom. ii. 13,) "the justification which Paul speaks of as unattainable by works of law, is a *meritorious justification*. But the justification which James tells us is to be attained, *not by faith only, but by works also*, is a gratuitous justification, to which both faith and works are necessary." He does not then lose sight of the fact that there were men who sought to be justified by the deeds of the law considered as meritorious, and claimed the reward as of debt. The attempt, it is true, is now hopeless, but was it always so? He remembers the Lord's declaration, "that when we have done all we are unprofitable servants." "Naturally," says he, "Adam and Eve were not entitled to any reward for their obedience; but when God said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," it implied a promise that if they did not eat they should not die. Consequently, if they had obeyed, life would have been due to them as a debt." (Rom. iv. 4.)

This at last is unquestionably sound truth. God can never be in debt to His creatures, except as it pleases Him in His love to make Himself so: and in such sense only could the

Apostle say, "to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." But what is the bearing of this rule upon the doctrine that faith justifies as it is a work, and yet can justify only by pure grace. If that which God has conditionally promised be held a debt on fulfilment of the condition, then surely just as he who wrought out the legal righteousness could claim the reward as of debt, so he that works out the Gospel righteousness may claim the reward as of debt also. The circumstance that the one righteousness was perfect and the other imperfect makes no difference in this particular question of title. If God was not by nature bound to give reward to either—and if by promise He bound Himself to give reward alike to both, then the performer of the assigned work, be it which of them you will, can prefer a claim to the reward by way of debt as valid, or as ineffectual in the one case as in the other.

But let it suffice for the present to have given some account of this system. To discuss it will furnish employment for another lecture. These concluding remarks were only meant to suggest that the Synod of Dort passed no injurious judgment on it in affirming that it regards God as abrogating the requirement of a perfect legal obedience, and substitutes faith itself and the obedience of faith for the perfect obedience of the law, and deems them worthy, through grace, of the rewards of eternal life.

## LECTURE XXI.

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### JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

LAST lecture was employed in explaining the nature and exhibiting the progress of Arminian doctrine, from the first minute germ of error dropt into the Church by its author, to the full grown tree, that flourished so wide, and yielded so much unwholesome fruit. A sentence or two at the close suggested the proof of its unscriptural character. But now let us examine the matter somewhat more closely—not attempting to follow in detail, and point by point, all the particular statements of the authors whom it was necessary to quote for the fair display of the system, but bringing rather into view, in orderly succession, those clear Scriptural truths and maxims, by which the Holy Spirit sends His ploughshare through the scheme, and tears up the whole from its foundations.

Several of these are not denied by the advocates of justification by works, yet require to be placed distinctly in view, in order to render manifest the real spirit of the question. And,

I. In the first place, man has no claim as against God by nature. Existence, with all the living powers implied in it, and all the outward gifts conferred upon it, is of necessity a mere boon. The nothing from which we came could have no precedent right to any of these things; nor could the thing created require, as due in equity, that the momentary act of power which brought it into being, should be extended forth into a



continuous working, and impart to it in perpetuity what is equivalent to a new creation every moment. Whether such a course may not be accounted by the Creator due to his own glory, is another question; but the creature evidently cannot, as of justice, demand the continuance of his being for one hour—and if not of being itself, then, certainly, of none of its privileges. To live, to think, to act, to have blessings placed within reach, to be capable of acquiring them, to see the right method of acquiring them, to acquire them actually, to possess, to enjoy them:—All this is the overflow of God's free goodness to that which in itself is nothing, and can own nothing; and as it was originally granted without previous right, so, unless some special compact intervene, it may be taken away without the shadow of injustice.

II. But if, in the second place, the Creator, as Sovereign, prescribe to His creature a certain course of action, and expressly promise that, upon obedience and not otherwise, He will bestow certain benefits, then a new state of matters arises. In this case, if the appointed task be fully performed in the manner and measure prescribed, although it can add nothing to the Creator, who does but make His own use of His own workmanship; yet, in virtue of the promise, the creature has acquired a right to the reward. It is, indeed, a right very peculiarly modified. The service was due without the promise. The promise was spontaneously given, and might have been withheld. The reward of which it speaks would have been mere gratuity, if bestowed without promise. Betwixt the reward and the work, there is no link but just the promise itself. It is as if a generous prince had promised his subject, of pure favour and aside from all just claims of service, the gift of some rich domain. Thenceforth the subject would feel he had a claim to that possession, on the strength of his sovereign's word, and his sovereign would allow the claim. Yet should circumstances

afterwards arise to render the fulfilment of the promise impossible, or even to make its retraction undeniably just and necessary, the disappointed man might bewail his loss as a calamity, but could not exclaim against it as a wrong; all that before was properly his he still retains. The bounties of God, indeed, are liable to no such uncertainty. His arm is omnipotent, and His purpose unchangeable. But the advantage, in point of security enjoyed by His servants, lies wholly in the *excellency* of His perfections, and not at all in the *desert* of their performances. Suppose their obedience faultless, yet if only the things themselves be considered, their work was mere duty, their wages mere largess. What binds the two together, and constitutes the creature's only *right* to reward for service done, is the *promise*. Still it is a real right. They have obtained it without merit, but it is theirs. God, who bestowed it freely, respects it as valid. He allows them to have a claim upon Him; for thus it is written—"To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." (Rom. iv. 4.)

III. There is just one law given of God to man at the creation, which continues in force from that hour to this, and will continue for ever. Of that one law the rule is love; the sanction—death and life for punishment or reward. Death is due to the demerit of sin in itself, as well as denounced by the threatening. Life, as we have seen, is no otherwise a debt than as it hath pleased God to constitute it such by promise. And in regard to the tenure by which life is held, it clearly makes no difference whether the commandments and conditions of the law became known to man by the light of nature or by revelation. In Adam, what, indeed, was the sudden light of nature that informed him, as soon as he breathed the breath of life, but just a revelation? And what have been all the revelations since made to his descendants, but just fresh instructions to the light of nature? When Cain slew his brother, and in consequence felt

that every man who found himself had a right to slay him, it is evident that he understood the moral law in regard to murder as clearly as Noah could do, even after God in vision had said unto him, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." (Gen. ix. 6.) The expectation of reward for obedience is but just the counterpart of this dread of punishment for transgression; and the self-righteous confidence of all such heathenish and unenlightened men as deem themselves safe in their uprightness, is nothing else than their extravagant and presumptuous self-appropriation of the promise recorded in the law of Moses by the Holy Ghost, (Lev. xviii. 5,) "Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgments, which, if a man do, he shall live in them, I am the Lord." And, in short, when the law received its final illustration and establishment from the lips and from the example of the Son of God, although its applications were more fully displayed, its substance underwent no change, either in the requirements or in the sanctions. As to the former, Christ, teaching the two great commandments, which comprise all others, quotes them from the law of Moses, itself the echo of a primeval announcement; and even when he proclaims, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; *as I have loved you*, that ye also love one another;" (John xiii. 34) the freshness of the precept, it is manifest, lies solely in the *extent* of the love enjoined in it, and not in its *essence*.

As to the latter, again, that is, as to the sanction, its confirmation was not more solemn or more affecting amid the thunders and earthquake of Mount Sinai, than it was by the lips of Redeeming Mercy itself. For, after setting forth the righteousness of the law, in all its compass, and all its purity, with what words does the Lord conclude his sermon on the Mount?—"Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his

house upon a rock ; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock : And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand : and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof."

In all its parts, therefore, the law of God to mankind,—the moral law of righteousness is only one,—the same immutable thing from the creation to eternity. It is true, there were positive institutions built upon it, and there still are, of which it is the nature, nay, the perfection, to change with circumstances. It is also true, that apart from these, and with respect to rules and conditions strictly moral, there are some who teach, that a new law has been established. But, for the consideration of both these points, the proper opportunities will occur hereafter. Meantime, let us consider,—

IV. Fourthly, That no mere man on earth has ever earned life by obedience to this law ; but Christ has fully kept it, and the reward is therefore His of debt.

There is no truth of the whole Scripture more clearly expressed in speech, or more strikingly verified in action, than that the Son of God fulfilled the law. Superior to all law by His Divinity, He was by free choice made under the law. Thus found, in the form of a servant, His language is, " Lo ! I come, in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God, yea, Thy law is within My heart. . . . The Lord God wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened Mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair : I hid not my face from shame and spitting." (Gal. iv. 4.; Phil. ii. 7.; Ps. xl. 7.; Is. l. 4, 5, 6.)

And there was no defect in the obedience which he thus rendered. The law, in Him, had all its requirements fully satisfied. Accordingly, He testified His righteousness, and asked His reward. "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father! glorify Thou Me with Thyself, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." (Jn. xvii. 4. 5.) It was not merely that as a man, fulfilling the bounden duty of a man, He could claim the debt of promise. There was good desert in his service, even towards the Father. For as it was of choice, not of nature, that he became subject to the conditions of humanity, so, in His obedience, though achieved through flesh and blood, there was a dignity and a worthiness truly Divine. By due of merit, therefore, as well as in terms of the covenant, he receives the recompense. "Because he humbled *himself*, therefore God hath highly exalted Him." (Phil. ii.) "He is gone unto heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities, and powers being subject unto him." (1 Pet. iii. 22.)

V. Christ having fulfilled the law in the character of our Surety, His obedience, by imputation, becomes our justifying righteousness.

Here many, especially of the latter Arminians, explicitly deny our doctrine. Acknowledging, in some indistinct unappreciable sense, that we are pardoned and accepted for the sake of Christ and by means of His humiliation, they reject unequivocally all idea of His righteousness being accounted ours, and standing at the bar of Divine justice instead of our own. Thus Macknight, in his note upon Rom. iv. 3, makes the following remark:—"Neither here, nor in Galatians iii. 6, is it said that Christ's righteousness was counted to Abraham. In both passages the expression is, Abraham believed God, and it, viz. his believing God, was counted to him for righteousness. . . . Farther, as it is nowhere said in Scripture, that

Christ's righteousness was imputed to Abraham, so neither is it said anywhere that Christ's righteousness is imputed to believers."

Now, it is granted at once that the doctrine in question, which the commentator disallows, is nowhere taught under the express form of words. But it is not, on that account, the less certain that the doctrine in its substance and reality is every where in Scripture most unequivocally taught. The Lord, as Mediator of the new covenant, is understood and believed by all, to conduct alike the concerns of His people's souls with God, and to convey the bounties of God to His people. One leading function of His Mediatorship is the High Priesthood, in virtue of which he offers both gifts and sacrifices for sin—*δωρα τε και θυσιας υπερ αμαρτιων*; not only the sin-offering by which guilt is expiated, but those free-will offerings also, which under the law were the emblems of all cheerful and willing obedience. This Suretiship, moreover, which equally pertains to the Mediatorship, was ordained, as well to make sure all that of which God's holiness required the fulfilment on the part of sinners, as to give sinners confidence that every thing should be performed which the covenant promised on the part of God. The task of completing, in his office, whatsoever of action or of suffering was necessary to its end, that of bringing sinners unto God—this task devolved upon Christ. He perfected the work. And it is acknowledged—nay, zealously proclaimed by all, that alone for His sake and through His finished mediation only, sin is forgiven and the sinner accepted. Now, if thus by the benefit of Christ's mediatorial righteousness the transgressor is justified, and if he can by no means be justified without it, then to deny that His righteousness is imputed to that transgressor, is little else than to repudiate a clear and convenient expression, while the whole meaning which it conveys is substantially admitted.



In truth, it is not from dislike of Christ's righteousness so much that the Arminian denies imputation, as from the dread that his own righteousness shall thereby be superseded. But that is the precise point which in the matter of justification, Paul, throughout his Epistles, labours most earnestly to secure. (Rom. iii. 20.) "By the works of the law," says he, on the one side, "shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin, but now the righteousness of God, without the law," he goes on to say, on the other side, "is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe," *εις παντας και επι παντας*. Surely this amounts at least to imputation, unless the righteousness of God should mean their own righteousness after all. But the Apostle shuts out that supposition by his earnest desire that he "may win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is by the faith of Jesus Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," (Phil. iii. 8.) *την εκ Θεου δικαιοσυνην επι τη πιστει*. Here, then, is not only a distinction, but an opposition, stated betwixt God's righteousness and his own. Yet it is his hope to *have* it; and how is that possible, seeing it is not personal to him, nor inherent, unless it be *reckoned* to him as his, that is, unless it be *imputed*. Still, if this be indeed a righteousness coming forth from God, *εκ Θεου*, is it necessarily the righteousness of Christ's mediatorial obedience? It must be so, if it was Christ who, by his obedience unto death, redeemed us; for as surely as the guilt of sin accrued to him from us, so surely does the gift of righteousness come down to us from him. The Apostle links these two things together indissolubly—"For God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him!"—*Made the righteousness of God*. This, to say the very least, must involve imputation, and that

the imputation of His righteousness, *in whom* we are made righteous. (2 Cor. v. 21.) But, indeed, there is no occasion for multiplying arguments, when clear testimonies are so accessible. Is not Christ made unto us of God, (1 Cor. i. 30,) "righteousness," as well as "wisdom, sanctification, and redemption?" Is it not written that, "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous"? After all this, when Paul descants upon "the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works," what semblance of reason can remain for doubting, that the righteousness so imputed is Christ's? Or, consequently, that by imputation of Christ's righteousness we are justified?

In whatever way, however, the work of Christ as Mediator becomes effectual to the justification of sinners, I mean, whether it be by imputation of His righteousness or otherwise, a most important question remains to be discussed with the Arminians, namely, By what means does a sinner take hold of Christ for justification? By what voluntary act or process on his own part, does he acquire a *title* to forgiveness, acquittal, and eternal life? Is it by mere faith? Or is it, in any sort, by works? We believe and teach,

VI. In the sixth place, that it cannot be of works, because then it must be of debt.—They, on the contrary, affirm that of works it is, and yet not of debt.

Some illusion and obscurity has been thrown round this inquiry, by massing together the whole blessings of salvation from first to last. It is better to view justification apart from the others; a course from which no logical fallacy or unfairness can arise, inasmuch as a title to justification is inseparably accompanied by a title to all the rest; but until justification be first secured, nothing can possibly confer an ulterior right to the inheritance.

What then procures the sinner's title to justification through Christ?

The commentator so often referred to, Dr. Macknight, answers the question after this manner:—First, he allows that “neither Jew nor Gentile can be justified meritoriously by works of law, because law, requiring perfect obedience under the penalty of death, its only operation is to make sinners sensible that they are liable to condemnation without giving them the least hope of mercy. So that any expectation of eternal life which sinners can entertain, must be grounded upon a method of justification different from that of law.”—This being the case, he goes on to say, “the Apostle introduces his account of the Gospel method of justification as follows:—Because both the law of nature and the law of Moses hath made perfect obedience necessary to justification, and because no man is able to give such an obedience, a righteousness without law, that is, a different righteousness from perfect obedience to any law whatever, is now discovered in the Gospel to be what God requires in order to salvation.” (On Rom. iii.)

Yes!—The Synod of Dort were right in affirming that Arminianism “abrogates the requirement of a perfect legal obedience.”

But since the original ground of man's acceptance is thus abandoned, in what consists the new foundation on which he may build in order to be justified? This question also our commentator answers clearly, stating in detail the manner of Abraham's justification, as he understands it to be taught in Rom. iv. 3—“His faith was counted to him for righteousness.”

“The original word *ελογισθη*,” says he, “signifies to state and sum up an account, also to *put a value* upon a thing. The word count includes both meanings. In judging Abraham, God will place on the one side of the account, his *duties*; and on the other, his *performances*: and on the side of his performances He

will place his faith, and by mere favour, will value it as equal to a complete performance of his duties, and reward him as if he were a righteous person ;"—and then is subjoined the passage, already quoted, in which is pointedly denied all imputation to Abraham, or any one else, of Christ's vicarious righteousness.

Now, here it is obvious, first of all, that what this sensible and learned man, but bad divine, calls "Abraham's performances," is just his measure of obedience, real, though far from perfect, to the one original law of righteousness,—the rule of the covenant of works.

Equally plain it is, in the next place, that though he speaks of faith as something different in kind from those "performances," and qualified and sufficient in the judgment of grace to make up the deficiencies of them, yet faith itself, as well as any of the others, is a "performance" required by the primitive law; nay, Macknight himself, in a passage quoted on a former occasion, pronounces faith to be the greatest of all good works, being the principle from which all good works proceed: on which account it will also be remembered, he elsewhere describes justifying faith as inclusive of charity and all Christian obedience.

Farther, therefore, it is evident, that works alone, under merciful construction, doubtless, are by this theory, the means of obtaining a title to justification through Christ. And although the old law is departed from in its perfection, yet since it alone defines and prescribes all good works, there being no other law to do so,—and since, moreover, all men are not saved under the lenient system, but many are still condemned and perish; it is clear there must be some certain grade of well-doing, some definite line of demarcation betwixt the more and the less of obedience,—a line shifting evermore according to the difference of persons and circumstances, but always discernible to the Omniscient Judge as his rule of judgment, by attaining to

which a man is justified, but falling short of which he is undone, —justified because so far he was virtuous, undone because so far he was wicked. Now, what is this, when all is done, but a variable and imperfect law, the rule of which no man can possibly be sure of in its application to his own case, but the sanctions of which, severe or bountiful, God executes according to His sovereign wisdom? The works performed under it, what are they but works of law? and the rewards reaped on its conditions, what are they but the fulfilment of promise? It is vain to allege that they are not earned by merit in the works, for neither did Adam so earn the blessings of Paradise, nor do the angels so purchase the happiness of heaven. It is vain to reply that the recompense is bestowed gratuitously through the merits of Christ; for no less gratuitously, of God's original loving-kindness, was life continued to unfallen man, under the covenant of works. The sole right upon which Adam's obedience could claim reward, was the right of promise; the right upon which Arminian faith and performance claim reward, is just the right of promise also: for, it is written, "he that believeth shall not be condemned." But the Word of God declares that, under the perfect law, "to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt." Therefore, under the imperfect law, unless the Scripture can be broken, to him that worketh is the reward of debt also. While the former reigned, the prize was life. While the latter reigns, the prize is justification. As truly, therefore, as Adam, if he had stood, could, as of debt, have laid claim to life, so truly may the Arminian, if his scheme is true, and if he have wrought the necessary modicum of imperfect righteousness, lay claim, as of debt, to the whole justifying efficacy of Christ's obedience unto death! It is to no purpose that he seeks to evade the odium of this presumptuous conclusion, by declaring and reiterating that he is still justified freely, though by works, because it was of free grace that Jesus died.

Paul shuts out the pretence, when ascribing to free grace the whole privileges—and justification is among them—of the elect Israel he observes, “And if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.” (Rom. xi. 6.) It is remarkable, that on the axiomatic decision of this passage, which by force of Scripture explodes his whole system as contradictory and unsound, our commentator makes no comment.

VII. Finally, then, we arrive at our last proposition in regard to a sinner's title to justification. The inspired Record supplies the words in which it is unerringly and beautifully expressed:—“It is of faith, that it might be by grace.” (Rom. iv. 16.) So much extent and importance attaches to this topic that it is plainly impossible to enter upon it at present. This I regret the less, as it passes naturally into the subjects which must henceforth daily occupy our attention, and will form an appropriate conclusion to our labours, if God prevent me not through indisposition from addressing you once more at the close of the session.



## LECTURE XXII.

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### JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

THE substance of last lecture on the all-important subject of Justification by Faith, was this:—That no creature can, by virtue of his natural powers or righteous deeds, bring God into his debt; according to that challenge of the Apostle, “Who hath first given unto Him and it shall be recompensed unto him again?” (Rom. xi. 35.)—That, nevertheless, where God has prescribed a work, and propounded a reward, and promised to confer the reward if the work be performed, then He is pleased, the task once accomplished, to bestow the recompense, under the notion of paying just wages—clearing an acknowledged debt:—That there is but one only law of God to man, given at the creation, republished at Horeb, ratified by the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming, which defines and requires all the works of true righteousness, and, along with the threat against disobedience, includes the promise of life for performance:—That Adam, violating this law, Christ in flesh alone fulfilled it, and thus earned the reward as of debt:—That, as our Surety, he fulfilled it, whence his obedience is our justifying righteousness; and, finally, for we could not overtake the crowning truth of all:—That the title to an interest in this righteousness, cannot be of promise made to works, else it were of debt, and could not be of grace. This last particular in our enumeration is of such importance, as to call for a remark or two before we proceed.

The Arminians teach, that by a certain amount of good works, and, along with this by faith,—the best of all good works, we are justified under the Gospel dispensation; yet, seeing neither the faith nor the works are perfect, and could not be accepted unless through the merits and mediation of Christ, they teach at the same time, that we are justified of free grace. Their doctrine is, in short, that we obtain remission of sin and acceptance with God, neither by grace nor by works apart, but by both united together. Now the Apostle Paul, comparing the Jewish believers in Christ of his own age, with the seven thousand who in Elijah's days had not bowed the knee to Baal, remarks, in the passage quoted toward the end of last lecture (Rom. xi. 5, 6.)—"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work." Here obviously it is not only meant, that if the election be wholly of grace, it cannot be at all of works, or if it be wholly of works, it cannot be at all of grace; that, no doubt, is certain, and almost a mere truism; but it is also meant, that if it be *at all* of grace, it cannot be in any degree of works, and *vice versa* if *at all* of works, it cannot in any degree be of grace. The reason is plain:—If the grace, though necessary, be not sufficient without the works, then, in concurring with the works, it loses the freedom and gratuitousness which is essential to its nature, it admits the element of debt, and so grace is no more grace. And, in like manner, if the works, though necessary, be not sufficient without the grace, then, in accepting its co-operation, they relax the claim of debt which, under the promise, pertains to their very essence: their title becomes blended with the gratuitous element, and so "work is no more work." It evidently makes no difference in the present argument, that Paul lays down these principles in con-

nexion with the doctrine of election, not of justification, for if grace and works be, as he teaches, natural opposites, contradictory and irreconcilable, so that they cannot combine as joint causes of the one privilege; equally impossible must it be for them to coalesce as a common ground of the other. The axioms of Scripture science, therefore,—the Divine metaphysics,—dissipate as futile and false the hypothesis, that where grace, by itself alone, could not be extended adequately to meet the occasion, works were of effectual service in justifying the sinner, and that where works came far short of their original standard, and let slip their covenanted rights, nor could pretend of themselves to deserve acquittal, far less reward, grace was called in, to take account of their *deficiency* as if it were *perfection*. The heavenly scheme of our salvation contains no such incongruity. It is clear we must be justified by faith only, or by works only; we cannot be justified by both together. And by which of the two we are not left to doubt. “By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified before God, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom. iii. 20, 26.)

VIII. Not content with declaring that our justification through Christ's obedience is of faith, the Apostle lays down, in another spiritual axiom (quoted at the end of last lecture), the *reason* why it is so: “It is of faith that it might be by grace.” (Rom. iv. 16.) True, this is said not directly and immediately

of our justifying righteousness itself, but of the promise by which the blessing is annexed to it. But from the very nature of the case, it is evident that the rule must apply just as much to the former as to the latter, to the righteousness as to the blessing. For if the promised blessing must be of faith, in order to be by grace, the justifying righteousness, in order to be by grace, must be of faith also. And the context supplies an illustration that gives much force and clearness to this abstract argument. Abraham, after long walking with God, had obtained the promise of Canaan, as the emblem and pledge to himself and his posterity of a better country, that is an heavenly. He had offered Isaac, and received in consequence, a solemn confirmation of the former promise by an oath. The Scriptures, moreover, had distinctly recorded the transaction in these words: "By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed My voice." (Gen. xxii. 16—18.) In the terms of this record, the Word of God, it is plain, had established an express and inseparable connexion betwixt the Patriarch's inheritance and his deeds of actual obedience. "*Because* thou hast obeyed my voice, in blessing I will bless thee." And yet, after all this, in what manner does Paul, instructed by the Holy Spirit, guard us against misapprehending the true nature of the tie subsisting betwixt work and recompense? "The promise that he should be heir of the world," he tells us, "was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." So even the rewards of a believer's obedience to the law, do not come to him through the law, but through another righteousness, that of faith. Not only, therefore, must that obedience

and that righteousness be totally different things, but the legal obedience cannot acquire the justifying righteousness. The works which cannot attain the reward, cannot surely achieve the righteousness to which the reward pertains, for that would be to acquire the righteousness and the reward both. And, therefore, what the Apostle affirms concerning the inheritance of Abraham, must much more be true of the righteousness by which he gained the inheritance. "It also is of faith that it might be by grace."

The converse of this important truth, namely, that upon Scripture principles, if acceptance before God with its consequences were through works of law, it must be reckoned not of grace but of debt, has already been illustrated; and so far, since no other means of justification are ever mentioned but these two, faith and works, the foundation is firmly laid already of the inference, that being unquestionably by grace, it can only be of faith. One branch of the alternative being cut off, the other is conclusively established.

Again, the declaration that the necessity of its being by grace is the reason why it was made to be of faith, proves clearly that faith, as the instrument of justification, cannot in God's sight be viewed as a work, or as the principle of work; for, if it were, then *justification* would be of work, "and if of work, then it were no more of grace, otherwise work were no more work." This subverts at once the whole Arminian theory that faith justifies, because it is nothing else than a right disposition of heart toward all the revealed truth and will of God, embracing, in fact, a virtual obedience, with allowance for human infirmity, to the whole extent of the Divine commandments. Such a definition of faith would, in Paul's estimation, expel the element of grace from our justification altogether, and, instead of his own conclusion, establish just the opposite; viz. this:—"It is by faith that it might be of debt."

Do we then deny that faith is a moral virtue, an act, a habit of obedience to the law, a duty of pre-eminent importance and necessity which we owe to the God of truth? Far from it. We know that not sinners only, but Adam, in the state of innocence, and the holy angels,—nay, the Lord Jesus himself, as made of a woman, made under the law, have ever been bound to receive with absolute credence and confidence every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The sin of acting otherwise is nothing less than making God a liar.

But faith, as matter of contemplation, has more than one aspect. As matter of action, it has more than one intent. It may BE, and it may be CONSIDERED, on the one side, an act of humble obedience; on the other, an act of joyful assent, or of rich appropriation. With its face towards the law, it gives just submission to sovereign authority. With its eyes upon the cross of Christ, it gives adoring welcome to grace, immense and unfathomable. In terms of the first covenant, it were a work of obedience, receiving, for the promise sake, a reward of debt. In terms of the new covenant, it is a deed of simple acceptance, receiving through the promise, but, for CHRIST'S SAKE, a treasure inestimable, the boon of free mercy, and ill-merited loving-kindness.

In this mode of distinguishing, however high and spiritual the field of reflection may be, there is nothing so foreign to the common sense and common experience of mankind, but it may be explained and justified by instances drawn from the humblest laws and experience of even our corporeal nature. There is scarcely any action of our life so indifferent, morally speaking, or holding so much of mere instinct or appetite, but in certain circumstances, and under certain conditions, it may acquire a moral import of the very deepest kind. A man hungers, after certain hours of abstinence; his daily meal is set before him; he eats and is satisfied. Who regards him ordinarily in doing



this as performing a grave duty, or, indeed, as anything else than gratifying the cravings of nature, like the ox in the stall, or the lion in the forest, the one chewing the cud over his fodder, the other devouring his prey. Yet, place this man in circumstances easily imagined, and his use or abuse of bodily nourishment comes intensely in contact with the revealed law of his Creator. Suppose him suddenly fallen from honour to adversity; his eager hopes have been grievously disappointed; his proud spirit has been shamefully mortified and abased. He cannot brook the degradation. Hating life, he loathes on that account his daily food:—(the thing has happened.)—He will not touch it;—he murmurs—he pines—he dies. Here, it is plain, the omission of an indifferent act has turned into a neglect of essential duty, and *that* has passed into positive transgression,—a deed of murder, in its most aggravated form of suicide. A danger as real, and more frequent, lies in the opposite extreme of over-indulgence in the use of meats and drinks. Not only did the heathen, unconverted, run in that respect to an excess of riot, but even, after embracing the Gospel, the Corinthian, bringing the taint of his idolatrous licence to the table of the Lord, pushed bodily intemperance to the height of profaneness against God, and “ate and drank judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”

Turning from these phenomena of mere passion and appetite, to the analogous workings of faith, we may clearly, by means of them, see how that grace, in one view is a work of law, in another not a work of law. The man who loves sin, and being stout of heart, is not afraid of judgment, when the cry has reached his ears, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,” refuses to answer. Breaking through the influences of God’s gracious invitation to believe, he comes into collision with the authority of God’s sovereign command to believe; and when others found that they who believe are not

condemned, he finds that the man who believes not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the only-begotten Son of God. His unbelief is a crime; it has broken the law, and death is the punishment. But it is otherwise, far otherwise, with the convicted sinner,—the trembling expectant of coming wrath. In his experience, to receive forgiveness and peace through the blood of Christ, is not impulse, nor constraint, but spiritual appetite. The Spirit of God, working graciously in secret, has aroused in his soul a famishing hunger, a panting thirst after Divine benefits. Place before his eyes the flesh of Christ which is meat indeed, and his blood which is drink indeed, and say—Eat, O friend! drink, O beloved! and, like the hunger-bitten traveller of the salt and burning desert, he drains the living fountain, and feasts himself on the savoury food. It is not that he is commanded to do this, but that he is invited. It is not that he is compelled, but that he is permitted. It is not that he is bound, but that he is free. Not that he must, but that he may. Nature moves him to believe, not a mandate from without,—nature, I mean, as regenerated by the Spirit of Holiness—the Divine nature of which he is made partaker. And this faith justifies him as it is inwrought in his heart by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; not as it is commanded, but cannot be produced by the law of works. Viewing the matter in this light, it is easy to see how acceptance before God, and everlasting life, being by faith, can also be of grace. For,

1. In the first place, when no longer regarded as an instance of obedience to the moral law, faith is removed from the only position and predicament in which it is possible for any act or work of man to claim the blessing under the notion of a recompense due. Propose a task,—provide a reward,—secure it by promise, and if the work be performed, the wages are a debt. But take any one away of these three concurring elements of the

case, and the obligation vanishes. Remove the reward, and the promise becomes meaningless. Annul the promise, and the reward can no longer be claimed. Abolish the work, and there remains nothing to be requited. Performance being once put out of the question, there may still be blessing in reserve, and still a promise securing it; but there being nothing any more of stipulated labour existing, or covenanted service, of purchased effort and execution, the promised blessing takes the form of a mere gift, freely bestowed, and appropriated by an act of pure and simple reception. And such the faith of a Christian really is. Here, then, lay the secret and scarcely appreciable error of Arminius in interpreting the words, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." He did not view the Patriarch's faith merely as the acceptance of a boon, but as the fulfilment of a command, and in that character, and only in that, believed and taught that it justified. But if life be proposed, and life be promised, to faith as a work of law, it matters nothing how low the requirements of that law be pitched. Where the faith is found, the life, according to the Scriptural rule, is of debt; salvation by grace is but a form of speech. We are sent, like Israel of old, to seek righteousness, nominally by faith, but in truth by the works of the law, and, *like them, but under a still more subtle delusion*, we stumble at that stumbling stone. (Rom. ix. 32.)

2. In the second place, as salvation, upon the ground of faith considered as mere acceptance, is *really* a free grant, so also it manifestly *appears* to be such. If, in terms of the Arminian system, the great Lawgiver drew near proffering life as of sovereign grace, but prescribing faith as the condition—faith, because it is a right disposition of heart towards His truth and His laws—faith, because it worketh by love, which is the life of all true obedience—faith, because it is a root upon which all fruits of good conduct and righteous actions whatsoever must

grow—faith, because indeed it is worthy of His holiness to regard it for Christ's sake, as the supplement and reparation of all shortcomings in actual duty—then it would, by no means, be so apparent that His tender of eternal life were a pure gratuity. Angels would clearly understand it to be so. Man in his state of innocence, doubtless, understood perfectly that, if the reward of his uprightness were to be of debt, it must be notwithstanding a debt due by God, not to human merits, but to His own faithfulness. Widely different is the case when the ways of God have to be made plain to the apprehensions of blind, proud, self-righteous transgressors. Broke loose from the restraints of godly fear, and counting the will of the flesh and of the mind as their law—if they accept of reconciliation and life at His hands, on condition of a faith that is tantamount to life-long toil, mortification, and self-sacrifice—they will never be verily satisfied that their escape from condemnation, and their final recompense, is the mere gift of sovereign mercy, and nothing else. But if, of His self-actuating love through the sole merits of His dear Son, He bring pardon, peace, righteousness, praise, the fellowship of His Holy Spirit, and the blessedness of a heavenly inheritance, as His proffer to sinners indiscriminately, from the least of them to the greatest, so that whosoever will may reject it and perish, and whosoever will may embrace it and live, then is the character of His salvation unequivocal. Self-confidence may despise, false zeal may misconstrue its freedom; but the fact is in itself as clear as the nature of things will suffer it to be, that, inasmuch as it is of faith, it is also of grace.

3. In the third place, and to conclude, faith, in accepting the salvation, *acknowledges* it to be of grace. On the part of those who are saved there is here no misconception. Why does the believer flee for refuge to a Saviour? Because he owns himself lost. Why does he seek life at the hands of his Creator? Because he feels himself the child of death and hell. Why does

he cry for righteousness from the mercy of his Judge? Not only because he confesses himself guilty, but because he feels that for his ruined nature, feeble, forsaken, and in bondage, to work out a justifying righteousness for itself, is an absolute and eternal impossibility. Faith trains the Christian to lowliness, then, in these respects, but it completes the instruction by the estimate which it forms of itself. "No man can come unto me, saith the Lord, except my Father draw him:" "And I," says the Christian, uttering the assured conviction of his heart, "I, O Father, never would have come unto the Lord Jesus—never would have placed this faith in Him, unless Thy providence had prevented, Thy word alarmed and instructed, Thy Spirit laid His strong and gracious hand upon me! I was hastening, blindfold, to the pit:—and Thou, of Thy Fatherly pity, hast reclaimed me to Thy house and Thine inheritance!"—Nothing, surely, can bear stronger testimony to the freedom of the Gospel than those experiences of the believing heart—and, therefore, whether in fact, in demonstration, or in avowal and confession, nothing is more certain than that "it is of faith that it might be by grace."

"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea we establish the law." The gift of His grace by which God justifies, sanctifies, glorifies the believer, is nothing else than the reward of debt, which Christ, through the Father's promise earned of the law, by his perfect obedience—His obedience unto death—earned *for* His people that He might bestow it *freely* according to His pleasure. It is impossible now to enter upon the connexion which obtains, universally, and inseparably betwixt the principle of a living faith, the channel of imputed righteousness, and those works of heartfelt love and thankfulness, through which the believer honours God, works out his own salvation, and is made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. One thing only can we now repeat

concerning them, that while under the provisions of the first covenant, they would, if perfected, have had claim to a reward of debt; under the second, while dispensed by promise, according to the fixed rules of rectitude, they are bounteously imparted notwithstanding—so the Scriptures testify—as the free gift from Christ, of what his toil and blood had purchased, so that while the true desert of sin is punishment, the super-abounding recompense of holiness is absolutely gratuitous and free. “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Amen.



## LECTURE XXIII.

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### ADOPTION.

WE have for some days been considering in detail the Christian privileges of Adoption. The business of this Lecture will be to give a brief history of the blessing from its source to its consummation.

The distinguishing name by which the first person of the adorable Godhead has taught us to designate Himself, is the Father. It has its origin in nothing arbitrary or mutable, but in the original nature, and true relations and actual works of Him who bears it. As the Uncreated one, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things, He assumes a title the most expressive of that dignity, authority, beneficence, and love, which pertain to Him, and instructs His intelligent creation to understand and to use it. Through every spiritual department of His works that we have access to know of, His paternity extends, like a golden chain, binding all things together in one. The highest link is fixed in heaven, all the brightest have their attachments there; but there are others that reach the earth, that stretch beyond the limits of uncorrupted loyalty among the beings whom God hath made, and are the hold and safety of multitudes else devoted to destruction.

This Heavenly Father has an only-begotten and well-beloved Son, who was with Him in the beginning, the joint possessor in all their fulness of His Divine essence and perfections, com-

municated from eternity by that ineffable generation. And this first instance and prototype of all sonship is singular—it stands alone. To the Holy Spirit, Supreme Godhead does also pertain, by some procession from the other Divine persons to us inconceivable, yet in His unity of substance with the Father, that Spirit is not a son.

Where, then, in the next stage, does God carry forth the name and blessings of His paternal love? To an immeasurable distance from His own glorious nature, though still only among spiritual beings. Creation is the second ground and title of sonship, infinitely less glorious than generation, however divine and marvellous; since by creation it is only the *image* of God's being and attributes that can be conveyed; while by generation it is His very being and attributes themselves. To angels belongs that second place in the heavenly household; second, by an humble and awful remoteness from that of the first born, yet foremost in the order of created spirits, the chiefest of created things. In knowledge, power, and blessedness, inferior to none but God; His word bears them testimony, that when He fastened the foundations of the earth, when He stretched the line upon it, and laid the corner-stone thereof, these glorious beings beheld and triumphed in their Father's work. "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

The same bounty of God which conferred the second title of sonship upon the angels—that is creation—imparted it to man also. The Scriptures, which intimate so frequently, and so emphatically, our vast inferiority to them in the scale of spiritual greatness, bear unequivocal witness, notwithstanding, to our filiation. Thus, Luke the evangelist, in tracing up the human genealogy of the Lord Jesus not only to Judah or Abraham, but to our first parents themselves, having ascended to *Seth*, the other seed appointed by God to the woman instead of Abel,

whom Cain slew, of him says, "who was the son of Adam, who was—so he concludes it—the son of God."

But if the sonship of angels be infinitely removed in its nature from the sonship of the Divine word, equally, or if possible, far more removed is the sonship of Adam and his posterity. To fix in our minds this truth of His unapproachable excellence above both, and once for all to shut out all presumptuous imaginations, on this high mystery of Godliness, let us remember that the Son of God, His only Son, is alike of angels and men the maker; that the Father is by creation our Father expressly through the medium of His Son's operation. For the testimony of John concerning the Word is explicit. "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." (John i. 3.) In such manner, however, is this a truth that the Father's own will and power in our creation are by no means set aside; for Paul, teaching in the Holy Spirit assures us, that "by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things, God, that is the Father, hath also made the worlds."

After Sonship by generation, and Sonship by creation, comes still another—Sonship by adoption. In the first, the Father communicated eternally His self-existent essence; in the second, at the time ordained, He brought glorious Beings from the abyss of NON-EXISTENCE; in the last he recovers beings alienated, corrupted, and ruined, to the blessedness of His paternal favour. And as the Father Himself is one, so these several manifestations and actings of His paternity, however distinct, and in many respects remote from one another, are yet not dissevered but bound fast together in orderly dependence, each successive gradation, deriving strength, and dignity, and love, from those which precede it.

"The Father loveth the Son," we are told; and that love, corresponding to the glory of its object, must be infinite. Love

thus directed will extend in measure to the creatures whom the Son hath made, for, as the Patriarch expresseth it, "He hath a desire to the work of his hands,"—the love of a Creator to His offspring,—and in this, as in all things else, He reflects the image of the Father's heart. A new relation, moreover, arises, as the children of God's household multiply in His presence. A brotherhood springs up, the Scriptures refer to it, by which the lowliest child of the family, without aspiring beyond his place, or feeling any sentiment but that of wondering reverence and thankfulness, does, as being a son, in name and in fact, stand related, not only to his fellows, but to the First-born Himself, and through Him to the Father. The title given him as First-born of every creature (Col. i. 15), is significant at once of His connexion and His precedence.

Eventually, this high and holy bond of union, as we know by too sad an experience, did not prove sufficient to prevent a multitude of the sons of God from despising their birth-right, and falling into revolt. So far as the moral creation of God is known to us, no class of spiritual beings has either wholly escaped the taint of this corruption, or been left wholly to perish by it. It was perhaps the result of an inevitable defect in the nature of created things as such; certainly, in the counsel of God's inscrutable will, it was seen to be a thing fitting and right, that the inability of created wisdom or holiness to stand in its own strength, should be suffered to discover and demonstrate itself by a fearful apostasy from God, as well among the angels in heaven as by man on the earth. "The Lord hath made all things for Himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." (Prov. xvi. 4.) Much more hath He made the upright for the praise of the glory of His grace. If it was meet in His eyes, that, in order to show His wrath against sin, and make known His power to punish it, He should endure with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, far more

did He rejoice to make known the riches of His glory in the vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory. As regards the Lord Jesus especially, it is written, that all things were created both BY Him, and FOR Him; FOR the honour of His justice, doubtless, in judging the rebellious; but surely much more FOR the praise of His self-sacrificing love and mercy in seeking and saving that which was lost. Were it, therefore, a less probable supposition than it is, that, along with the paternal tenderness of God, the brotherly condescension and loving-kindness of His Son, combined to preserve a glorious company of the angels in their primeval uprightness, while the rest fell; yet BOTH these heavenly dispositions, as also the love of the Spirit, must surely be regarded as blending themselves with that surpassing grace, those peculiar yearnings of relenting compassion, and pardoning goodness to the children of men, that went to constitute amongst them, and to gather in, the sons of the adoption.

When the tender mercies of God had thus determined to save a portion of our guilty race, who so meet as the Son, by His nature, His person, by His place in the Heavenly household, by the powers and propensions of His Spirit,—who so meet as He to be their Saviour? To this blessed work He was chosen by the Father first of all. For, calling attention to Him by the Prophet Isaiah (xlii. 1), the Father, after saying, first, “Behold my servant whom I uphold,” immediately designs Him farther, “Mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth. I will set my Spirit upon Him. He shall not fail nor be discouraged until He hath set judgment in the earth.” *Elect*, therefore, the Son is to the service of mercy. And our election to sonship proceeds upon the foundation of His; for God the Father “hath predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in

the beloved." (Eph. i. 5.) By this election, then, to a mutual union between Christ and His people, Christ becoming the head of the adoption, clothes Himself as it were with this new title of Sonship, and, in addition to the bonds of creation, binds us by new and peculiar ties of fraternal relationship to Himself, and filial relationship to the Father.

The spirit of revelation enables us to trace the blessing onward into its effects. "It became Him," says the Apostle Paul, justifying to the Hebrews the humiliation of Messiah, "It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through suffering." (Heb. ii. 10.) Two things are contained in the statement. First, that according to the nature of God, and to the rectitude of His all-embracing sovereignty, atonement is necessary, if sinners are to be saved;—the penalty of their offence must be paid, judgment must be executed upon their transgression. The law which they had violated could not so exact its own of them that they could in justice be set free. To this effect it was weak through the flesh (Rom. viii. 3)—the flesh, which once corrupted, was unable, either by suffering out its due punishment, to recover liberty, or even, were it emancipated, to render anew an acceptable, that is a faultless, obedience. On whom, then, was it meet that the burden of redeeming sinners should be laid? That is the second thing which the statement intimates: it was on the Captain of their Salvation. And the ground of this propriety is immediately explained. It was found in the position which the Saviour held, first, by nature, then by creation, and lastly, by election betwixt the Father and the chosen seed. (Heb. ii. 11), "For both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one"—one Father; "for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." And the Old Testament quotations, by which this truth is confirmed to the Hebrews,



are remarkable. The first has relation to His prophetic office, that being the character in which He had first communication with His people, making known to them the saving grace of God. "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren (Ps. xxii. 22); in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee." The second, "I will put my trust in Him" (Ps. xviii. 2), has reference to the entire conduct of His redeeming work; and by its terms, He placeth Himself, as God's servant, the First-born among many brethren, in that posture of confident reliance, which was meet, towards Him that had promised to uphold Him in that very capacity, that He should not "fail nor be discouraged." The third quotation, while brought like the others to prove that the elect are Christ's brethren, does not however call them brethren, but *children*. The reason is obvious. Being the Lord's disciples,—His children in that sense so common in the Scriptures,—they are His brethren too. The force of all domestic ties and affections among men, is bound up in that one relation of true discipleship. "Who is My mother," said the Lord, "and who are My brethren? And He stretched out His hand towards the disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother." His children, then—a name by which He so often addressed them—and His brethren are one; and the text which the Apostle, proceeding on this principle, legitimately quotes, is one that has manifest reference to the conclusion of the Saviour's work, when He shall present faultless in the presence of the Father's glory with exceeding joy, every soul that had been committed to Him, by election, before the world was. The words are from Isaiah (viii. 18), "Behold I and the children which God hath given Me."

Thus, then, in bringing many sons into glory, it became the Father to make perfect through suffering the Captain of their

Salvation, because He was a brother. Not that this laid the Saviour under any necessity or obligation otherwise than of His free-love—God forbid ! The relationship itself was of grace ; but the grace presupposed, how seemly the consequence ! The same reason, moreover, gave additional propriety to what was otherwise most suitable, that the very kind of suffering, namely, which was due to the offenders should be undergone by the substitute, a thing possible to be done only in their nature. “ Forasmuch then the children,—the brethren, are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part in the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Had the restoration of angelic outcasts been his object, a far less humiliation than this would have sufficed. To save angels it had not been necessary to be made even for a little lower than the angels, but only as low. “ But verily he taketh not hold of angels ; but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham,” the elect portion of the sons of Adam—“ Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto *his Brethren*,” that His meetness to sympathise with them, and the boldness and tenderness of their confidence in Him, might be perfect—“that he might be a merciful and faithful High-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people : for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour those that are tempted.”

The great sin-offering, then, being once offered—the High Priest having once entered into the heavenly sanctuary—all obstacles being removed that came betwixt the Father and the objects of His redeeming favour ;—forth proceeded from heaven the Spirit of adoption, sent by the Father, and by the Son, breathing their desires in the fervour of His own loving-kindnesses that were of old, and purposing to carry out into perfect

execution their counsels,—which are His own also,—in the zeal of His Divine holiness, and by the might of His Omnipotence. Now He visits the children of redemption (not as if He had not done so heretofore, but now pre-eminently,) to confer upon them in actual possession the privileges of Sonship prepared for them by their Father in heaven before the foundation of the world. Unveiling to their eyes the wonders of the Scriptures,—revealing to them the Lord Jesus, and enabling them to receive Him with a lively faith, He gives them power to become the sons of God *in fact*, as they were such before in the Divine foreknowledge. They are severed from the citizenship of hell and of Satan. They take their name and their place in the household of God. His Son is thenceforward their righteousness and strength. His service is their occupation and their delight. His word and providence are their guides. His corrections are their holy discipline. The faithfulness of His Fatherly bosom is their refuge, its tenderness their solace. To enter into the brightness of His glory is their hope. The inheritance of His kingdom is their everlasting, all-satisfying portion. Not only is their spirit comforted here by the fellowship of Him who said, “Go, tell my brethren, behold, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God,” (John xx. 17);—they remember His other words also, “I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” (John xiv. 3.) Not only do they enjoy richly on earth the communion of the Holy Ghost: they know that He will be with them far more nearly and gloriously, as He will be eternally, too, in the home of saints. If even here, as the seal of God, He stamps them in part with the image of the Divine Holiness, advancing their souls in light and lowliness, and trust, and love, and joy, much more, they well know, will He exalt that similitude to a glorious pitch of sanctity and lustre.

when that which is perfect is come, and that which is in part shall be done away. If even now, when the children of God themselves groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, even the redemption of the body,—if now the earnest of their inheritance which the Spirit gives them,—the mere *foretastes* of Divine grace and goodness, be unutterably consoling, and precious, and sweet; the blessedness, they know, will transcend all thought of the imaginations of man's heart in the day when,—their nature having attained its heavenly enlargement,—he shall “fill them with all the fulness of God.” In one word, if the very beginnings of our filial privilege, still more its advanced stages, even in this world of tears, and temptation, and sin, could dictate to the inspired exhorter of the Hebrews, the words of joy with which I conclude, what shouts of victory, what songs of praise, shall attend its closing act, and celebrate its everlasting consummation, when, to the height of God's own plan and purpose that glorious hope of His Son's shall be fulfilled—“Ye are not come to the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire; nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken unto them any more. But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling”—for then at last are the effects of mercy and of vengeance revealed in awful contrast—“that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.” Amen!

## LECTURE XXIV.

### SANCTIFICATION.

THE doctrinal particulars of Sanctification, together with their proofs at large, having been brought under our consideration in another shape, let us now endeavour to take a summary view of the subject, keeping awake, as much as may be, our sense of the value of sanctification itself, as a living grace from Heaven, and contemplating, in the use of those spiritual powers which it furnishes,—if indeed they have been vouchsafed us,—its dependence throughout upon that blessed God—Father, Son, and Spirit—by whose will and operation alone it is wrought in our souls.

Can we better apprehend the true nature of this grace than by marking its tendencies and aspirations in a holy Apostle, as these have been recorded by his own hand, in words which the Holy Spirit taught him?

Paul had constant occasion throughout his ministry, to resist the efforts of “false Apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ.” (2 Cor. xi. 13.)—These were chiefly Jews, trusting in carnal advantages and legal observances, who taught, “except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” (Acts xv. 1; 2 Cor. xi. 18, 22.) Against such he earnestly warns the Philippians. (iii. 2.) “Beware of evil workers, beware of the concision *κατατομή* for we are the circumcision *περιτομή* which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in

the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh," he adds, and then shows by an ample deduction of particulars, that few could pretend to stand higher than he in point of Jewish privilege, or personal righteousness, according to the Pharisaic standard. "But what things were gain to me," he subjoins, (Phil. iii. 7,) "these I counted loss for Christ, yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

A precious attainment this surely were. But does the Apostle rest satisfied with it as if that were all? No; he regards his justification by faith as the ground and preparation for farther blessings at the hand of his Lord. Then, what are these? "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Here, according to the mind of Paul, are the main elements of sanctification—the wisdom by which it is directed—the experience and exercise by which it gathers strength—and the crisis of victory and glory in which it is made perfect. The essence of the grace itself, however, is that to which alone his words refer. The means, the influences, through which he hopes to attain it, are largely explained elsewhere, but here assumed as known. It is necessary for us, however, just to touch upon them, in order to show that the aids and opportunities of holiness, whether as conferred upon inspired men, or whether upon ordinary Christians, are in all material respects the same, rendering the aspirations of the very chiefest Apostle a fit pattern for the humblest believer to copy. Let us begin, then, as is



natural, with the inquiries, What is the power, and what are the means, that effect our Sanctification?

1. The power is that of God's Holy Spirit, a Divine person, and therefore all-present and all-mighty. It is His power directed unerringly, and applied invincibly, to the specific purpose of recovering elect man,—an apostate and corrupt, yet possessed of his original frame and faculties, and redeemed with the blood of Christ,—*back* to a perfect conformity with the character and will of his Creator. This is the whole and the only power that sanctifies, comprising, as it does, mysteriously the sanctifying grace of Christ and of the Father. It begins the work of our quickening and purification—it urges its entire progress on to completion. Apart from this, there is no cleansing efficiency, I do not say in mere human devices, but even in divinely appointed means. A boon of free self-originated love, this fellowship of the Spirit, where once accorded is never withdrawn.

2. The means, again, are mainly these:—The Word of God as written or preached; the worship of God in all its commanded services, including the sacraments; the dispensations of God's holy Providence, varying the external condition of every Christian through life for trial or for encouragement;—and in intimate connection with all these—the labours in every kind of Christ's ordained messengers and devout people, from the venerable employ of apostle and prophet, founding the Churches, or penning the sacred oracles, to the teaching, ruling, influencing of uninspired pastors, of parents or of brethren, whether in the synodical council, the worshipping assembly, or the intercourse of private life. All these co-operating together in the infinite multiplicity of their most wise and suitable applications, surround the souls of God's children, at least wherever the Gospel has free course, with a continual tide of purifying

influences, calculated in a wonderful manner to promote their cleansing from all sin, and their advancement in true holiness.

It is only, however, we repeat, it is only by the presence and energy of the Divine Spirit, operating in the heart along with these and beyond them, that any one of them separately, or the whole concourse and concentration of them together, can produce on any soul of man a sanctifying change. If we contemplate the whole family of saints, from its most renowned princes and worthies, through every intermediate rank, down to its veriest babes, it is God dwelling, breathing, working in them all, by one and the self-same virtue of the Holy Ghost as Sanctifier, who, stooping in His love to the use of means, imparts to them the life, refinement, and spiritual beauty, that entitle them to the name which they bear. True, the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of Prophecy, acts in another sphere. Paul, considered under His influence *officially*, if one may use the expression, is separate from all ordinary Christians, and classed with inspired men. Still, as the subject of sanctifying grace, Paul differs not in the kind, but only in the degree of his privilege and progress, from the weakest disciple of his day, whose name, whose very existence, the Scripture has omitted to record. Miraculous gifts, we must remember, are entirely distinct from saving graces. *Many* have prophesied in Christ's name who were workers of iniquity. (Matth. vii. 23.) One was even an apostle, and yet a traitor;—of the twelve, and a devil, notwithstanding. (John vi. 70.) Even on the momentous question of instruction, information, knowledge of the things of God, through which, as a medium, holiness is wrought, the distance between what was given to the inspired, and what the uninspired may reach, is, perhaps, not so great as our first conceptions might assume it to be. The disclosures made to the prophets by the Spirit, were either conveyed in words,—indeed, we are told they often were,—or in images and thoughts,

expressible by such words as the Spirit could dictate, rendering His direct communication to them, either altogether, or very nearly, what the written Scriptures are to us. A single exception to this rule we do, perhaps, find,—that of Paul caught up into Paradise, and hearing unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter, for the reception of men on the earth: and, doubtless, these discoveries might be effectual, through grace, to produce a peculiar strain of holiness in the Apostle; yet, so that they needed the counterbalance of a peculiar temptation, a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations. But allowance being made for this singular distinction and favour to one individual—admitting also the fact that a peculiar solemnity and vividness usually accompanied the revelations of the Prophetic Spirit,—the question still remains, Did the Holy Ghost ever reveal to any single prophet, more of the Heavenly truth than, for the use of ordinary believers, He has recorded in the entire Scriptures? Or if not, seeing the prophets themselves were sometimes far from understanding all that they pronounced, but had to “search what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, even when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow,” (1 Pet. i. 11.) MAY IT not well be, that uninspired Christians, meditating on these very words, along with the later Scriptures, shall, by the gracious, though non-miraculous, illumination of the Holy Ghost, obtain as clear, as full, as affecting views of the Divine mercy, especially to the end of their sanctification as were even vouchsafed to a David or an Isaiah? The case of our Lord’s personal disciples and followers, it must be confessed, is different from that of the ancients, but only in degree. Grant it; rather let it be proclaimed that, in point of holiness as well as knowledge, they stand to all ages pre-eminent.

Still those peculiar influences of the Spirit, by which in their times, the holy man, though a private Christian, was privileged far above the transgressor, though a prophet,—by which the beloved John, both saint and seer, was set wide apart from Judas Iscariot, a seer, yet the thrall of Satan,—those blessed influences are granted to us, as truly as they were given to Paul; and while the *height* and *lustre* of His holiness, God's especial gift to him, may lie, as to its measure, much beyond our hope, yet in substance and character, it is the self-same holiness to which we may, nay must, aspire; and our prayer for sanctification, if we would aim aright, must just be the adoption and utterance of his longing, "That we too may know Christ, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means we might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Now, having said so much of the power and of the means by which sanctification is effected, we come to speak of the essence of *sanctification* itself, as revealed in these words just quoted.

1. The first breathing of the Apostle's desire is, that he may know Christ. It is plain, from the whole context preceding and following, that it is as a believing man held already justified by Christ's righteousness, but not yet complete in holiness, that he desires this knowledge. "Not," says he, "as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus;" (ver. 12) that is His entire salvation, of which holiness we know is a principal part. The knowledge of Christ, then, which the Apostle here expresses his longing to possess more and more largely, is not such as might be conveyed to an unregenerate prophet; it is not even such as he himself, a holy and inspired man, had been favoured with, prophetically *more*, it would seem, certainly not less, than any other apostle. He speaks evidently of that peculiar knowledge of

Christ, by which, as a means in the Spirit's hand, the soul of a sinner is first quickened and then perfected in the life of God. John testified of the Eternal Word, that in Him was life, and the life was the light of men. In such sense did Paul desire a fuller view of this light, as more largely to partake of the life also.

Behold, then, the object of that knowledge which constitutes an essential portion of our sanctification, and lies at the foundation of all the rest. It is Christ, the image of the Invisible God. (Col. i. 15) Then are we made wise unto salvation, when the Holy Ghost, invigorating and enlarging, and purifying our intellectual powers, causes "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, to shine in our hearts." (2 Cor. iv. 6.) It is the Lord Jesus—of whom the written word is one continued testimony—who is Himself the living and essential Word, and who sends to us the enlightening Spirit from the Father; it is He that utters home to our inmost souls the truths by which all our vileness is purged out, and our whole being transformed. Fixed in the spiritual contemplation of Him, we behold the God with whom we have to do, perfect in the attributes alike of absolute rectitude and infinite grace, as both are exhibited in marvellous unison by the Cross. This revelation tends to holiness, moving our hearts at once with fear and love. In him we descry the precepts of righteousness; whatever the Scriptures teach of piety, charity, purity, all embodied, all exemplified, and harmoniously working together, under circumstances the most varied and impressive, with a faultless completeness, a heavenly lustre, a captivating loveliness, which, exposing by contrast the loathsomeness of sin, makes us long to put away this defiled garment and be clothed with this spiritual beauty. That also tends to holiness. Perceiving that He in whom we trust, Himself had His trust in God, and that He loved the Father, even as we are called and drawn

to love Him; having ever before our eyes the fact, that in the strength of these principles, and by the Holy Spirit dwelling in Him, there was found within the field of His enterprise, no labour which He did not achieve, no temptation which He did not conquer, and no suffering which He did not patiently endure, until He had earned His crown:—We, too, are animated to increase in the like faith and holy love, that, by participation of His own spirit, we may, through them, be enabled to walk in His footsteps, and so be made partakers at last in the fruits of His victory. By the growing knowledge of Christ in these and the like particulars—a knowledge never to be exhausted—does the Holy Spirit, operating in all our frame, impress upon us, with increasing distinctness, as by a seal, the image of our God and Saviour; insomuch that, looking forward through the present to the future, and, by the experience of faith, anticipating the effects of sight, we can feel how true, how inspiring are the Apostle's words (1 John iii. 2.); “Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is; and every man who hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”

2. Adhering still to the knowledge of Christ as that which sanctifieth, the second particular which Paul desires to know, is “the power of His resurrection.” And, if in referring to His personal glory, what he coveted was the enlargement of a spiritual, transforming, purifying acquaintance with it; much more, when the theme is His quickening power, must it be presumed that the Apostle's hope is set upon a growing experience of its actual operation in his heart. Regenerate long before, and advanced in holiness as much, probably, as the noblest of his cotemporaries, he still hungers and thirsts after more righteousness, confident that in the end he shall be filled.

Now all Christians, if they would be holy, must aspire, with



much prayer to the same experience. And *what is* the power of our Lord's resurrection which they must seek thus practically to know? That, without question, by which He arose, by which the glory of the Father raised Him, by which the Holy Ghost, personally the worker of all Divine miracles under the Gospel covenant, quickened Him in the sepulchre, as He had fashioned Him before in the Virgin's womb. Of this power the Scripture describes a two-fold operation.

1. The first is exhibited outwardly in the Lord's exaltation, involving that of His servants. He issued from the tomb—He commissioned His ambassadors—He ascended up on high—He sat at the Father's right hand—He sent forth His Spirit—He established His kingdom on earth—He exercises unlimited sovereignty over angels and men—He will come to judge the world in righteousness—He will advance His people to a share of His own eternal glory. Concerning this manifestation, more especially, of the power of Christ's resurrection, the Apostle makes glorious discoveries in his Epistle to the Ephesians (chaps. i. 18; ii. 1—22), praying that "the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they might know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

So far the power of Christ's resurrection, in its bearing upon the sanctification of his people, is exerted chiefly in receiving

gifts for men, providing for them the external means of holiness on earth, and exalting them to the rewards of holiness in heaven. One inseparable consequence, however, of his exaltation, the effusion, I mean, of His Holy Spirit, is directly related to another,—to a

2. Second operation of the power of His resurrection, that, namely, which is inward in the hearts of believers. Accordingly, in the sequel, there is pointed affirmation of such an agency. “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead *in sins*, hath quickened us together with Christ. For by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast; for ye are His workmanship, created again in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained that ye should walk in them.” Nothing can well be more explicit than this, unless a statement to the same effect in the 6th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans may appear more express, because it is limited to inward sanctification only. After teaching that the believer, being baptized into Christ Jesus, is baptized also into His death, His burial, His resurrection, the Apostle insists upon the effects of this undivided and far-reaching fellowship. “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” What do these heavenly sayings testify, but that the Son of God, as covenant Head of His chosen, when He had once so suffered for sin, as to be justified from sin, resumed His human life, and rose from the grave by the power of the Triune Godhead; that, having finished the work of an earthly affliction, He entered upon that

of a heavenly administration,—that, even by the same power, He lives immortally, and reigns supremely—that with wisdom unerring, with righteousness, love, and zeal unbounded, He presses onward from age to age, the works and enterprises of His mediatorial kingdom, foreseeing, in their consummation, the brightest effulgence of His Father's glory, and the final perfection and blessedness of His redeemed. Thus surely it is that He liveth unto God. But He does not thus live alone. His people, too, are baptized into this His life of holy energy as they were before into His death and burial. They are not separated from Him. There is one body, He the head and they the members; and one Spirit—Godhead—but in human nature, the Holy Ghost especially, that animates both Him and them. O blessed virtue of Christ's risen holiness! What elect soul shall it not recover? What returning sinner shall it not assimilate? What obedient son shall it not array in heavenly purity and brightness? Need we wonder that the Apostle should add fervent exhortation to his announcement of such high privilege, and exclaim, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God; for sin shall not have dominion over *you*, for ye are not under the law but under grace." The holiness thus pursued through life, a bodily death advances, a glorious revival perfects. The power of His resurrection, who is Lord both of the living and the dead, operates resistlessly throughout, and shall be the stay of our eternal blessedness.

3. In yet a third particular, Paul, breathing after perfect sanctity, would acquaint himself more fully with his Lord.—"That I may know, says he, the fellowship of His sufferings." As Christ underwent afflictions inexpressible, sounding all the

depths of human labour and sorrow, and yet by that very humiliation, perfected His obedience and achieved His glory, so His servants also, to be complete in His image, must have experience of His pains and griefs, as they shall find likewise in time of need the support of His presence. Through much tribulation, they, too, must enter into the kingdom of Heaven. His fellowship with them is inseparable in death and in life. With what a familiar skill, with what unaffected pathos, does Paul treat of this topic, generalizing the facts of His own personal history. "We are troubled on every side, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal body." (2 Cor. iv. 8.) By communion with Christ in both, their holiness was promoted. Tribulation wrought patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. (Rom. v. 3.) Nay, it was only where patience had her ample field and her perfect work, that they could be complete and entire, wanting nothing. (James i. 4.) So satisfied was Paul of this, that, finding it to be the will of his Master, he cheerfully embraced a life-long trouble and temptation—a thorn lodged in his flesh—the messenger of Satan to buffet him. "For this thing," says he, (2 Cor. xii. 8,) "I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities (he had been compelled to boast of his privileges) that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong."—Behold, then, the manner in which the people of

Christ know the fellowship of His sufferings, know the power of His resurrection, know Christ Himself in the beauty of His holiness, and the glory of His all-sufficiency ; and find His hidden energies, in all their pilgrimage from first to last, by means of His word and discipline, but by the *immediate* agency of the Holy Ghost enabling them, it may be slowly, but yet infallibly, "to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. vii. 1.)

Conformity to the death of Christ in the submissive obedience of our own death, and participation afterwards in the resurrection of the blessed, are just the completing acts of Christ's sanctifying work. Here all the lines of this doctrine meet, and stretch forth from thence through ■ glorious eternity.

## LECTURE XXV.

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### SAVING FAITH.

IN presenting a summary view of the grace of Sanctification, I took occasion to remark, that, as wrought in us by the power of Christ's resurrection, it consists in the same spiritual principles and characters through which the Lord Jesus, the Holy One Himself, finished the work which His Father gave Him to do in the days of His flesh; and not only so, but through which, also, virtually at least, He continues to administer in heaven the affairs of the universe. Faith, love, hope, these three, the graces by which every Christian achieves his salvation, are the vital energies of soul and spirit, by which, in their earthly measure of sufficiency, Christ himself endured the Cross, and by which, in their heavenly maturity, and under their new names, He sways the sceptre. The death which He died, He died unto sin once by force of these, and by the strength of these, as transfigured with Him in glory, the life which He now liveth, He liveth unto God.

There is attendant upon our conception of such graces as existing in Christ, a certain perplexity, springing from a similar want of clearness and fixedness in our ideas of His person. He is God, He is man; the two natures in Him, though united, are distinct. Our minds are apt, when embracing the Unity, to overlook the distinction; and, when marking the distinction, to lose sight of the Unity. Hence a degree of uneasy dimness



and incongruity, in the notions, we frame of the sentiments and actions proper to such a Being. The high mystery of the subject, too, makes us afraid, and with reason, of approaching it too boldly. Yet the things which are written, are written for our learning, and where, as in this matter, revelation speaks clearly, we are privileged, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to pass safely between the opposite dangers, of thinking confusedly on the one side, or presumptuously on the other.

God created man in His own image—in the image of God created He him. (Gen. i, 27.) Such essential powers, then, of human nature, as are those of believing, loving, hoping, have their counterparts in the Infinite mind, according to the majesty of its being and attributes. What in us is belief or trust, directed to God, in Him is the assurance of an infinite understanding, with an absolute reliance upon His own self-existent all-sufficiency. What in us is hope, in Him is that infallible certainty regarding the future, which waits upon Omnipotence, the prerogative of a power that speaks and it is done; that calls the things which are not as if they were, and is instantly obeyed. The sentiment of holy love, so far as it is familiar to our consciousness, speaks of Him more directly, though in us it is but human, in Him divine. Now, what is in this manner true of Godhead as such,—of Godhead in the Father, and in the Spirit,—is also true of Godhead in our adorable Saviour. And whatever may be peculiar in the regards of the Divine persons to each other as these are modified by their wonderful relationship, yet all alike must be resolved into the regards of God to God—the heart of Jehovah towards Himself.

Passing, however, from the more general view, let us attend to this truth, in its bearing especially on the grace which we are now purposing to consider—Saving Faith. It deeply concerns our right understanding of this grace, and

still more our sense of its power and excellency, to contemplate it as originated, exerted, and consummated in the person of our Great Exemplar. Whether we regard it in its causes and instruments; or whether we consider it, again, in its main actings and effects; or whether, finally, we view it as tried, and by trial perfected; we shall find that the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Author and Finisher of our Faith, does but impart to us, according to the measure of our need, a grace which, in Himself, is Divine and absolute.

Preliminary to the treatment of these particulars in succession, one great fact requires our devout consideration. If Divine perfection stamped its own image on man in the act of creating him, that image must surely be complete and faultless—nay, very majestic and glorious—in the Man Christ Jesus, assumed, as He was from His first nativity, into one and the same person with the Eternal Word. That union, we have ample proof, is as real as intimate, as effective as enduring in its essence and all-important consequences, as to our apprehensions it is unexampled and stupendous; and what all reason, in such a case, would beforehand suggest, we find wonderfully realized in the facts of His history—that the graces and virtues of humanity in Him, far removed from all possibility of defect or discordance with regard to their prototypes in His own Deity, are so greatly enlarged, so sacredly pure and perfect, so thoroughly harmonized with His uncreated sanctities, that He ever appears before us in the consistency and oneness of a single individual, presenting, through the powers and graces of a matchless human soul, the highest conception which our faculties can reach of the invisible God, and being to our eyes, and not to ours only, the very effulgence of the Father's glory. In the Spirit and experience of a Being so singular, so exalted as this—*What* is Faith? The question is far from being one of mere curiosity, since “the just shall live by faith,” and, more

particularly, since His faith is not only the pattern, but the foundation also of our own.

Let us endeavour, in the hope of heavenly teaching, to solve the question.

1. As it regards the cause and the occasion of faith. In the hearts of Christ's people, the *occasion* or *instrument* of this Grace is the revelation of Divine truth which reaches them, since the death of the Apostles, by the written word; its *efficient cause* is the gracious operation of God's indwelling Spirit. Is there any parallelism or any analogy between these facts, and what the Divine oracles disclose to us concerning faith as existing in Christ Himself? At His higher nature, the eyes will be dazzled and blended that dare to look but with veneration and awe. Yet he speaks of it Himself, and condescends to bid us understand. We may, therefore, with reverence inquire, When the Jews were about to stone Him (John v. 17—23) because he had not only broken the Sabbath, claiming a Divine right over that day, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God—"Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself but what *He seeth* the Father do: for what things soever *He doeth*, these also doeth the Son *likewise*. For the Father loveth the Son, and *showeth* Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will *show* Him greater works than these that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement unto the Son—that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." Here then we find not merely implied but openly declared, the performance of *Divine* works by the Son, in virtue of the disclosure made to Him of His Father's will—a disclosure co-eval, and co-equal doubtless, with the communication to Him from eternity of His Father's es-

sence. If the Son could, that is, would do nothing of Himself—for the inability is evidently a moral not a natural inability—if *whatsoever* things he saw the Father do, these also did the Son likewise, the Father in His love having shown them to Him; do we not see in this heavenly revelation the fountain of all the revelation made afterwards on earth? And in the divine, the infallible assurance with which the Son received and acted on the manifestation of His Father's will; do we not find that transcendental faith—that reliance of God upon God, which is figured forth—alas, how faintly and imperfectly! in the reliance of believers on the declaration of His truth by the word. Of the Holy Spirit's part in this heavenly trust let us not speak, for the Scripture is silent. We know only that He is one in essence with the Father and the Son—present, therefore, and participant in all their acts.

If, passing from the contemplation of the filial Godhead as possessed by Jehovah before his work of old (Prov. viii. 22), we now regard Him as made flesh, and dwelling among us, it is needful to bear constantly in mind, that His relations as a Divine person, underwent no change by the incarnation. While instructing Nicodemus with the voice and aspect of a man, He is still careful to retain His place and authority as the Son, who is in the bosom of the Father. (John iii. 11.) “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no one hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the *Son of Man which is in heaven*.” The light, however, and the trust of that fellowship which eternally pertained to Him as God, could not, from diversity of nature, reach to manhood, even in Him. Another revelation, and another faith, perfectly reflecting the image of their glorious originals in His Divinity, but as distinct

in kind, as the lower nature in His person is from the higher, were imparted to His human spirit. And in what manner imparted? *Even as the like gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost are superadded to the powers of nature in other believing men.* The degrees, indeed, are different; they, besides, are sinners; He is holy. But, due allowance being made for these distinctions, the causes which produce human faith in Christ, and in His people, are the same, and operate alike. The testimony of the Evangelist Luke to this effect is remarkable. (ii. 39.) After stating that when his parents in his infancy had performed all things for Him at Jerusalem, according to the law of the Lord, and returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth, he adds, “And the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him.” Here mention is first made, evidently, of His natural faculties in mind and body—these, at least, are certainly included—He grew—*He waxed strong in spirit*, and by whose power, if not by His own?—of whom it is written, (Col. i. 16,) “that all things were created *by* Him and *for* Him—that He is before all things, and by Him all things consist?” But when it is subjoined that He was filled with wisdom, and that the grace of God was upon Him, the sense is plain, that by that operation of the Holy Ghost, which is able to open even blind eyes, and regenerate carnal hearts, His clear and pure spirit was filled increasingly with heavenly knowledge and endowed with all God-like virtues. In this passage the historian does not seem to speak chiefly, if he speak at all of the Spirit of Inspiration. That we are told elsewhere, in connexion with our Lord’s prophetic work, was *given* Him, indeed, and not by measure. But the wisdom ascribed to Him here is that which springs from grace,—the wisdom that increases gradually by the use of appointed means. Accordingly, the next section of the narrative presents Him to our view at twelve years of age, entered in the temple, after

having attended the Passover, sitting in the midst of the doctors—that is, within the circuit of their seats—and humbled there to the place and posture of a disciple,—both hearing them and asking them questions:—submitting, on the other hand, to be questioned by them as public instructors, until all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. The subject of this converse undoubtedly was, the sacred writings, for these were doctors of the law; and many were the subsequent occasions in which the Son of God manifested His perfect acquaintance with the Word of God—often had He perused the page which He expounded in the synagogue at Nazareth, saying, “this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears, (Luke iv. 21); and often had He pondered, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, “those things concerning Himself, by which, after His resurrection, He made the disciples’ hearts burn within them “while He talked with them by the way, and while He opened to them the Scriptures.” (Luke xxiv. 27, 32.) Behold, then, the way in which human faith, in the Lord of Glory, was generated and fostered. Frequent in prayer, for that is recorded, He waited on appointed ordinances; He learned of authorized teachers; He searched the Holy Oracles; He listened to the Prophetic Spirit, in common with all His prophets; He was guided and strengthened by the Spirit of Grace in common with all His Elect, from the greatest of them even unto the least of them. Created, and supported, and enlarged in the same nature with them, by the same power that works in them the like effects—the powers of His own Godhead—(and this does not at all exclude the miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost in His nativity)—His holy soul—willing in all things to be made like unto His brethren, is content to seek the knowledge of God by the same means which they also are privileged to use, and joys to receive His graces, faith in particular, from the same bountiful Spirit,



by whose enlightening and sanctifying fellowship, abiding in their inmost being, they also find strength to believe. By methods and agencies accessible to them, His human trust was brought into glorious concert with His Divine assurance in the Father; so that the united accordant sentiments of His two-fold nature could, in true and appropriate words, be uttered by Him as a single and undivided person. Who administered the reproof of faith to the tempter in the wilderness, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God?" (Mat. iv. 4.) Who maintained the truth in the face of deadly enemies, in the strength of such confidence as these words express (John viii. 28):—"When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone, for I do always those things that please Him?" Believing thus, in full view of the cross, as He had believed before at the beginning of His conflict, *who*, finally, gave utterance, after rising from the dead, to His calm and sublime anticipations of the future, in terms so assured as the following:—"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world?" (Mat. xxviii. 18—20.) Who spake these and many such things? It was our Lord. But was it God in Him, or was it man? No one can solve the question in that shape. It aims wide of the truth, and cannot find a true answer. It was neither nature apart—it was both natures in one. It was God-Man—the One Immanuel declaring, in words to make heaven and earth rejoice together, the glorious and infallible assurance of His Divine-human faith.

What strong encouragement is thus afforded to our faith ! Like humanity in the Lord Himself, supported as to our natural parts and faculties by incarnate Godhead, though without the personal union, yet to the very height of all His purposes with us ;—our souls, in a spiritual view, are instructed and established mediately by the very same truths and ordinances that nourished His faith ; while the living Agent, whose immediate energy works faith in us according to our necessities, and in Him, according to the grandeur of His office and enterprise, is one and the same Heavenly Spirit of wisdom and holiness, and power ! Joined by *such* communion to the Lord Jesus as He is to the Father, drawing strength and confidence, moreover, from the mystic union of our own very nature with Godhead in His person, on what immoveable foundations do we build our heavenly trust ! With what boldness may we say, “ If God be for us who can be against us ? ”

If the truth be clear, and if we have clearly apprehended it, that, in unison with His Divine faith, there is in the Lord Jesus a human faith, identical as to its *origin* with the faith of His people, we shall much the more easily perceive, that, between the actings or practical *effects* of faith in Him and in them there is a close resemblance.

II. This is the second branch of our subject. Here, then, the correspondence is obvious. As the Divine Word, relying upon the Father’s purpose, consented, before the foundations of the world were laid, to redeem a future people from the race of fallen Adam, so they, by faith, receive Him as one set up to be their Redeemer from “ everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was (Prov. viii. 23), one who was by the Lord as one brought up with Him, and was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him—rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and whose delights were with the sons of men.” As He, instructed in His Father’s will, and assured of his immuta-

bility, condescended, in the fulness of time, to be born of a woman, and share in everything of humanity but its sin, so they embrace Him, and repose their trust in Him, as God in flesh—the Holy One and the Just—the Creator of heaven and earth—become a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, for love to their souls. As He, thus made capable of infirmity and affliction, when once informed in His created Spirit what His Father had pre-determined of old, did, as A MAN ALSO, consent to be crucified unto the death for our sins, believing the Father's promise, that, when He had stricken, He would heal him; when He had delivered up, He would rescue him; when He had abased, He would exalt him:—Even so they place all their hope in Him for pardon, acceptance, and life, as the Lamb of God slain, to take away the sin of the world, and as God's High Priest “able to save to the very uttermost those who come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. (John i. 29.; Rev. xiii. 8.; Heb. vii. 25.) Thus His faith and our faith are directed to the very same things as the means of salvation. Believing in God, He did these wonderful deeds in order to save; believing in God, we rest in these wonderful deeds in order to be saved. His faith, built upon the stability of heaven's decrees, came forth to lay deeper the foundations of our hope. Our faith, building on the sure foundation He hath laid, takes hold of that eternal life prepared for us from the beginning. Nor does the parallel stop short with the fundamental principles, it passes into all the details of the Christian life. Having come by faith from heaven to earth, nay, descended into the grave in order to reach His people in the habitations of ruin and death, and there having placed himself at their head as the Captain of their Salvation; in faith, He thenceforth went before them, *in all* the way, their guide and shining example in the paths of godliness, righteousness, and self-government, strengthening them all the while by faith to follow

Him. Insomuch that an Apostle, of all his servants the most stedfast and indefatigable, does not only compare, but identify, the believing life which he led with that of his Master. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." The saying is true of every Christian.

NOTE.—Dr. M'LAGAN had written four Lectures on Saving Faith. The first one only has been given here, because the remaining three were designed to illustrate *one* topic—viz. the identifying of the *trials* of faith in *Immanuel* himself, with its trials in His people. No single Lecture of those three could have been given apart from the rest; and as of necessity the illustration of such a topic involves similar trains of thought amid great variety of subject, it has been judged better to withhold the whole than to swell out the volume. No apology is considered necessary for presenting the foregoing Lecture by itself. And none probably will be thought necessary by those who read it and who reflect upon what they read.

## LECTURE XXVI.

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### PERSEVERANCE.

THE term *Perseverance*, as expressive of a Christian privilege, must be understood, in strictness, to contemplate such Gospel benefits and advantages only, as are possessed through the instrumentality of will and endeavour on the part of the believer himself. The perpetuity of them all depends, no doubt, entirely upon the abiding purpose and operation of God; but we have better names for constancy as it dwells in Him, than this of perseverance. To His counsel pertains the immutability of infinite wisdom, and to His work the stability of the Rock of Ages. But *perseverance*, we understand to mean, the constancy of one who might very possibly have changed—the stability of man, whose soul, like his body, requires the combined and steadfast exertion of many properties and powers, in order to stand in its uprightness.

This duty then begins—for a duty it is no less than a privilege—just when the *life of the soul* begins; all the characters of which, when once impressed, are no otherwise changed than as they are perfected. The spiritual knowledge, the solemn convictions, the entire revolution of will and effort, consequent upon the operation of the Holy Spirit in our hearts at the time of our effectual calling, whether we consider them as the immediate cause of repentance unto life, or rather as a part of its essence, come all within the compass of perseverance; which,

indeed, Paul informs us that repentance unto salvation does, as a whole, when he approves and commends it as “not to be repented of.” (2 Cor. vii. 10.) The *faith* which then takes root must be *persevered* in—and the *charity* which grows upon it—and the *hope* which is the branching forth of both—and the holy living, nourished in the Christian by the gracious use of ordinances, and proper to every part of his temper and conduct, which is the rich and pleasant fruit of them all;—these, together with their happy accompaniments, humility, peace, rest, comfort, joy, the whole assemblage, in short, of Christian dispositions and habits, are to be persisted in so long as we breathe on the earth. For it is to the virtues of pilgrims and sojourners that the grace of perseverance, properly speaking, has respect. It begins where these begin, at the commencement of their spiritual life; it ends where these become no longer liable to infirmity, assault, or danger, at the close of their natural life.

Is it meant by this that perseverance, whether we call it privilege or duty, has no place in heaven? Quite the contrary. But then it puts on the glory of the region, and the inhabitants give it another name. As faith passeth there into vision, and hope into possession, so the believer’s perseverance—in this world a feeble combatant with mighty adversaries, often faint and sore wounded, sometimes all but suffered to perish—is there transformed into secure and immutable rectitude, fitted for the reverential fellowship of God and His angels. There at length the holiness of faithful men becomes, like their inheritance, incapable of corruption, of defilement, or of decay.

Is it meant, again, that the perseverance of the saints is on earth an uncertain thing, the sport of chances and contingencies, whose result is never fixed or seen until after it has come to pass? By no means. In the eyes of men, and even of angels, good or bad, it may often be doubtful: and the believer himself,



especially, when the hour of perplexity and temptation is upon him, may, to his own apprehension, nay, in very deed, so far as man's agency is concerned, so nearly touch the brink of apostasy and ruin, that not only in the agitation of the moment, but upon solemn consideration afterwards, he may have cause to confess with Asaph, (Ps. lxxiii. 2,) "But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped. Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins, so foolish was I and ignorant; I was as a beast before Thee." But as regards the doing of the Lord, the truth is all the while as the Psalmist soon perceived it to be—"Nevertheless, I am continually with Thee; Thou hast holden me by my right hand: Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory." The Father's faithfulness and the love of the Son, made effectual in the Christian's soul by the sovereign wisdom and power of the Holy Ghost, accompany him uninterruptedly through the whole series of his trials, to make his efforts as effectual when he is struggling in the horrible pit and in the miry clay, as when his goings are established on the rock; and when the foe hath reached his life all but by an hairbreadth, to interpose a protection that shall remove it as far from real danger as heaven is higher than the earth.

Once more, is it meant that this provision for his perseverance, following him, as it does, all his life long, is, however, but of recent origin, the fruit of new-sprung favour? No. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Of old, are we not here informed, were the very persons of God's people elected, their union to the Lord Jesus established, and their perpetual sanctity determined? Our perseverance, therefore,—well may it be accounted certain—

springs from the uncreated grace and sovereign will of the Most High God; as these again are in harmony with all the other perfections of His immutable and most blessed nature.

But the purpose of this lecture is not to state any more largely the doctrine itself under consideration: it is not even, after our usual course, to ascertain its connexion with any other leading doctrine, or point out its place in the general scheme of Christian truth; for, from the very nature of perseverance itself, a full exhibition of the particulars embraced in it, is of necessity an exhibition of all its relations also. Originating in the counsels of eternity—implicated with the entire process of our spiritual restoration, and merging in the heavenly felicity, there is no leading truth or fact of the Christian economy, which the simple statement of it brings not into view. Among the rest, its proper influence upon a life of holiness is presented. But that is of itself a subject so extensive, that in a brief exposition of the general doctrine it can be little more than barely mentioned. Can we, then, do better than bestow some more particular consideration upon it? Abstractly, the doctrine of perseverance is one of several most important truths of revelation, which erroneous, in common with irreligious men, are accustomed to reject as a useless, nay, a very mischievous dogma. Let us see whether it be not in reality a most powerful stimulant to well-doing, as well as an overflowing fountain of true consolation.

I. First, then, were we to address the first man we meet, saying to him in an earnest manner—"Persevere—it is a Christian's privilege—persevere in the faith of Christ, and in the way of everlasting life;" if he were a careless person, or one conscious of having but a name to live, and being dead, what would be the effect of such an exhortation, supposing what might very well happen, that it struck, and very seriously impressed him? In the frame of mind thus induced, would not his instant reflection be, "Can I persevere in a faith which I do not possess, or

in a path which I have never entered?" "Persevere"—did one say? "Is it in this neglect of Christ? and in this broad way that leadeth to destruction? I will turn," might he not add, "I will repent; where is God my Saviour?" Perseverance, then, in the mouth of an earnest man, especially if urged from the pulpit, is manifestly a doctrine fitted for the conversion of sinners. It is equally adapted to awaken self-deceivers, who fancy themselves safe because not worse than others; for let a man of this description be affectionately entreated, "Hold fast what you have until the Lord come! O see that you let not go the holiness—the blessedness with which Christ has endowed you; it is an earnest—you feel it is—of the purity and joy of heaven itself." The Spirit of God concurring, what could be more calculated to rouse his better thoughts, and make him begin to say—"What holiness is this of which my counsellor spoke? Where is this blessedness?—a foretaste of heaven! Surely my joy and my hope are all of the earth. Alas! my life at best is but a decent pursuit of earthly things. O empty shadow of a Christian, deceiving charitable eyes! O hollow and treacherous heart, deluding my own self! But let me no longer be deceived, God is not mocked; I will turn to him with all my might that I may know the privileges indeed in which He strengthens His people to persevere."

II. Within the confines, however, of genuine discipleship—and it is there properly that our subject lies—there may often be found a low estimate, and very defective use, of religious helps and advantages. A man believes very sincerely, and very unfeignedly loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet is not at all so much alive as he ought to be, either to his privileges or to his duty. In the sight of God and of his own conscience, there is truth in his spiritual life; but there is listlessness, there is remissness, there is unwatchfulness, over which, at least, in less important matters, the tempter, with the world and the flesh for

his auxiliaries, is ever and anon, through some surprise, or some vivid onset, gaining an easy, though a momentary triumph. "Be stedfast and immoveable," writes the holy Apostle before the eyes of such a man;—"persevere," cries the faithful preacher of righteousness in his ears. The words, "because the Spirit of God bears them testimony within him," are a knell to his conscience. Is it in his present condition he is to persevere? Shall he persist in sloth—be stedfast in neglect—immoveable in reckless unconcern about his own salvation and the glory of his Redeemer? Is his soul to continue ever as now, like a city without gates or bulwarks, open to every insult of the adversary, and liable, for any effort of his, to be one day razed to the foundations? No! it is in wrestling against all these evils until he subdue them that he must persevere. It is in cherishing his Christian graces until they reign paramount in his heart and life that he must use unceasing diligence. Accordingly, he sets himself to deepen his first humiliation for sin, by the remembrance of his recent follies and iniquities. He applies his heart to revive his first love for Christ, by joining in thought to the original pardon of his transgressions, committed in unbelief, and in the wildness of unrenewed nature, the long-suffering, the forbearance, and the tender pity, more recently extended towards him, while, against the light of acknowledged truth, and in too willing subjection to a power now conquered and dislodged, he was breaking the law of the Lord that bought him, and grieving the Holy Spirit of promise, whereby he had been sealed unto the day of redemption. Now he returns with more than his former reverence and fervour to meditated prayer, and all means of fellowship with God, labouring to keep his life free of those offences that were lately wont to pollute his sacrifice, and to cast a chill upon the ardour of his hope and confidence, by the reflection, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

III. It is not, however, in a day that the holiness and joy of a Christian reaches its maturity. Although grace may be paramount within him, and although sin may no longer be tolerated, but resisted, still he may have arrived at no just appreciation of his powers and privileges; he may be estimating far beneath their capabilities the precious energies with which God has enriched him, and therefore may come greatly short in the right employment of them. Though yet far from the mark, he may begin to rest content as if he had already attained. The doctrine of perseverance, seasonably urged, is one of the best remedies for this evil. Let a man only be brought to reflect, that God has already bestowed upon him the choicest of His blessings; that he actually possesses, in an elementary but improvable state, the very character and happiness which are to constitute his everlasting blessedness; that, if a Christian at all, he enjoys the very peace of God, which is not only bestowed, but perpetuated under seal of God's eternal covenant with His Son, and has tasted, in the reality of His graces and comforts, those first fruits of the Spirit, which are of the very same nature with the full harvest, the beatific vision and enjoyment of God; let him but be impressed with this, and unless Divine truth be unattended with Divine influences, he cannot fail to consider earnestly what his spiritual treasures are. He will begin to number, one by one, the bounties of his Redeemer; he will stir up his spirit to realize more thoroughly in his own apprehensions, their nature and their worth. He will enlarge his desire, he will strengthen his grasp to take hold of them more firmly, and to appropriate them more fully and more intimately than ever before. His pardon, what a deliverance! His regeneration, what a mighty act of gracious power! The Cross and the throne of Christ, what a refuge! The fellowship of God's Holy Spirit, what a fountain and river of life! That such blessings should be lavished upon a sinful inhabitant of the

earth, surely this is a miracle of heavenly love; and that all should be heightened from grace into glory, and perpetuated for ever in his Father's house, this is, indeed, the summit and crown of all prosperity! Is it not by faith in Jesus Christ that all these things are his? He will therefore seek to be strong in faith, giving glory to God. Is it not by love that his thankfulness is to be expressed, and his holiness perfected? He will therefore pray, that the love of God be shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him. He will purify his soul in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, and will love them with a pure heart fervently. (1 Pet. i. 22.) Before him is the prospect of future glory, honour, and immortality, as sure to be realized at the appointed time as his existing privileges, the earnest and pledges of them, are real and unquestionable now. He will therefore "gird up the loins of his mind; he will be sober, and hope unto the end for the grace that is to be brought unto him at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 13.) The certainty of being enabled to persevere, tends directly to the production of these effects; and, consequently, to the diligent use of these means through which, by God's appointment, they are to be secured. And, what is more, being once advanced to this hopeful condition, of which habitual attention to the state of his own heart, is one main characteristic, the fact, that all God's children persevere, becomes a powerful check upon all backsliding from the first moment of its appearing. If prayer has been sinfully omitted—if the Scriptures have been neglected or misused—if he has begun, without cause, to weary in some course of well-doing,—wherever, in short, the symptoms of spiritual decay have appeared, but especially if they extend, though it be in a slight measure, over the WHOLE of his spiritual frame, immediately he takes alarm. This he considers is ceasing to persevere. It is already to have lost, for the time at least, one most important



mark of true discipleship. It is the commencement of a process, the continuance of which were enough to wither all his graces and comforts ; and its consummation, should that be reached, enough to prove that his seeming conversion was but a transitory fever of the conscience, and his apparent attainments in the Divine life but a mere illusion of the devil or of his own vain heart. What stronger excitement can be imagined to stir up afresh the languishing graces of such a man, and send him forth anew upon a course of earnest diligence to make his calling and election sure. It is not that the doctrine of perseverance could not *earlier* exert this influence over him. It might, in part, from the very beginning of his obedience. But at the more advanced stage, its power is the more decided and effectual, and it continues to increase even to the end of his journey.

IV. For, in the fourth place, such faithful adherence for a length of time, and of course under many a trial, to the truth and righteousness of God, brings along with it, in virtue of the Divine rule, "to him that hath it shall be given," a variety of improvements, advantages, enjoyments, to all of which, as well as to all previous attainments, the rule of perseverance applies ; nay, which give additional substance and evidence, and consequently additional authority, to the fact of perseverance itself. To illustrate this by a few, and these very simple instances :—What, let us only consider, must be the effect of habitual watchfulness against sin, continual sorrow for it, daily confession of it before a holy God, and a Saviour whom it has crucified, fresh prayer for pardon, fresh forgiveness obtained through that blood of atonement, the perfect peace, the ever-flowing mercy and love of God experienced daily in the believer's soul, notwithstanding all his unworthiness, which is ever before him,—of all this what can the effect be, but to heighten the tenderness of his conscience, until it loathes and shudders at evils which in other days it scarcely ranked as sins, and to deepen his self-distrusting, self-

debasement of humility downwards, in proportion to the growth upwards of his other Christian graces in the Holy Spirit? Inseparable from such a state of mind, again, will be a fuller apprehension and sense of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accustomed to approach Him, he finds readier, nearer, surer access. All doubt about the truth and sincerity of his own application has so long ceased that it is forgotten. All question, as to his being received and answered by the Lord, is extinguished by the long and varied experience of His favour. There is a conscious reality in the intercourse—a reverential trustfulness—a calm assumption of the truth that the Lord hath loved him, and will do him good, such as naturally result from his past perseverance, and such as no other means than that could produce. Allied to his feelings towards the Heavenly Intercessor, are those with which he regards the Holy Ghost. When he bends over the Scriptures, or meditates on their truths as the light of his soul and his path, there is a leaning of his heart, without effort and without reserve, upon the wisdom of the Great Enlightener, and the grace of the Divine Sanctifier. He uses the understanding which his Maker gave him, but his trust, in the rectitude of his conclusions, rests upon the secret counsel of God's Spirit. In like manner, when he bows the knee in prayer to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, however his thoughts may be enlarged or his affections elevated, his humble reliance is wholly on the Spirit which helpeth his infirmities; for "we know not what we should pray for aright," is the abiding sentiment of his heart; "but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Conjoined necessarily with such a belief, is the peaceful assurance that he is heard and accepted. The blessings flow down which he had been prompted to ask, because it was

the purpose of God to bestow them. His love is inflamed; his hope brightens; his intercourse with heaven matures and mellows all his Christian affections towards his fellowmen, especially towards them that are of the household of faith. He serves God with gladness in every good work, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Lord Jesus. Now the bearing of all this upon perseverance it is not difficult to see. In the view of a Christian thus advanced and established, perseverance is a grace not merely to be aimed at as an important branch of duty, nor merely believed in as a clearly declared doctrine of the Scriptures, nor merely embraced as the subject of many clear and precious promises, but it is a matter of his own deep and happy experience, the work of God's good Spirit within him which sets the crown and seal upon all his other works, inasmuch as it is the permanent establishment and security of them all. Arrived at such an advanced stage of holiness and comfort, if he should waver, if he should stop short, if he should recede, what greater sin could he commit than just this falling away from his steadfastness? What more dreadful proof could he receive of being deserted by God, than just his so ceasing to persevere? Of this he is himself more watchfully aware than any man, and, therefore, there is no resolution more firmly fixed in his heart than that of the Psalmist, (lxxi. 16,) "I will *go on* in the strength of the Lord God;" and of Job, (xxvii. 6,) "my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live:" nor is there any warning in all Scripture of which he stands more deeply in awe than this, "the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him."

V. If there is any period more than another, at which the duty of perseverance puts on less the appearance of a requirement or necessity and more the aspect of a happiness and a privilege, it is when the Christian pilgrim draws near the close

of his journey. And yet there is no period in his whole course when its tendency as an excitement and stimulus to holy living is more evident and striking. Where there has been so much diligence and fidelity in religious duty as we have here supposed, there will usually also be a large amount of religious enjoyment. And in return, where comfort and healthful delight are the immediate effects of any course of action, that course is not likely to be deserted, but prosecuted rather with untiring energy and ardour. It is pre-eminently true of vigorous and fruitful Christians that "the joy of the Lord is their strength." The natural result of an action and re-action of this description, is constant progress towards perfection. When the work of righteousness produces joy, and joy both prompts and strengthens unto righteousness, there cannot but be a prosperous advancement. There is, besides, a special blessing from God provided for such as run this heavenly race. "Thou meetest him, O God," says Isaiah, "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember Thee in Thy ways." (Is. lxiv. 5.) It is, indeed, at every stage of the Christian life, essential to its existence, or at least to the proof of its existence, that it grow. But this is more peculiarly the case where it has approached perfection. Where its vital force is greatest, there, of course, all its peculiarities, and growth among the rest, are most conspicuous. Hence, to the Christian who has reached this blessed region of stable exertion and holy delight, it is more than ever apparent that ceasing to grow is ceasing to persevere. Inasmuch as he is not advancing he is backsliding. It is a symptom of decay that he is not gathering strength. It is the season of ripening fruit. If the clusters are not now gaining colour and sweetness in the sunshine, it must be because the branch has begun to wither. So the duty, the privilege of perseverance, binds him now to daily increase; and the absence of visible improvement in those eminent degrees of faith, patience, godliness, charity, to which

he has attained, affects him as sensibly, and with even more of practical influence and effect, than did the positive sins and offences of his early history. The position, moreover, which he has now reached, is itself at once a solemn admonition, and an animating encouragement to perseverance, or as he has learned to interpret that word, *progress*. His earthly career is all but finished. His translation draweth nigh. It is time that his earthly ties be loosed, and his meetness for the fellowships of heaven be perfected. Having persevered so long, and gained ground in righteousness, shall he now lose heart? Shall he now stand still? No! another effort, and another, for a little while, for a moment, and he has gained the prize. Thus, purposing in the strength of other powers than those of failing flesh, and leaning the more on that faithful arm which has so long upheld him,—the more that he feels the weakness of nature, and apprehends the greatness of his remaining task,—he looks around on every side to see what is yet to be done that he may do it speedily. Insensibly his earthly attachments lose their hold. Not only the desires of early and of middle life, but the lingering wishes of old age,—if he have lived so long,—that cling to ease, to attendance, to wealthy sufficiency, and even to rising offspring, save in so far as concerns their salvation, contentedly release their objects. There are greater things *unseen*,—but having evidence in his faith, and substance in his hope,—to which his affections now address themselves with emancipated alacrity, and joyful enlargement. He winds up his earthly business,—he sets his house in order,—he stands like Abraham, an old man, and full of years, girded, and waiting for his Master's call, having a desire to go hence, "and be with Christ, which is far better." Soon the gracious voice is heard; reverently, but joyfully, he welcomes it, and performs with Stephen the last act, at once of his Christian obedience and of his Christian perseverance, in "calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus! receive my spirit."

## LECTURE XXVII.

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### ASSURANCE.

THE term of the Original Scriptures, which the authors of the English version have translated "Assurance," is πληροφορία. Like the verb from which it is derived, πληροφορέω, its meaning is naturally suggested by its origin: we perceive at once that, as applicable to human affairs, it must signify the full and complete *carrying out* of whatever work or design or sentiment is in question. Both verb and noun admit of being used in either an active or a passive sense, according to circumstances; it will be sufficient to instance in the verb—"Do the work of an Evangelist," says Paul to Timothy (2 Tim. iv. 5), "make full proof of thy ministry," την διακονίαν σε πληροφορησον—"fulfil" it—as we read in the margin—a word of equal force in our language, had not usage somewhat abated its etymological freshness, and rendered such expressions, as *fulfil it thoroughly*, *fulfil it perfectly*, no longer unusual or pleonastic. "At my first answer," says the Apostle again (2 Tim. iv. 16), "no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, that by me the preaching *might be fully known*, ἵνα οἱ ἐμοῦ τὸ κήρυγμα πληροφορηθῇ, and that all the Gentiles might hear." In these passages, while the active and passive forms are distinctly used, yet the ideas which they severally express are in truth so nearly allied that our translators, without departing



from the real spirit of the original, make but little account of the distinction ; considering, on the one side, that the ministry could not be fully executed without proving its reality and earnestness to the convictions of all men ; and, on the other, that the preaching could not be fully known so that all the Gentiles should hear, unless the work of it had been fully executed and performed. This view of the matter is justified by the use of the term in other places, *which* it will be sufficient to notice without commenting on them. (Rom. iv. 21 ; Rom. xiv. 5.) These examples, it will be observed, are all taken from the writings of the Apostle Paul ; and it is curious that the word is never employed by any other writer of the New Testament, except his fellow-traveller and fellow-labourer, Luke, the inspired author of his memoirs. Struck apparently by the strength and clearness of the expression, and not the less on that account directed to the use of it by the Holy Spirit, he employs it in the preface to his Gospel, it would seem in the full breadth and comprehensiveness of its meaning. (Luke i. 1.) “ It seemed good unto me also to write,” says he. “ Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things *which are most surely believed* among us, των πεπληροφορημενων εν ἡμιν πραγματος. These things were passive of course, considered as subjects of testimony, and under this view they were, he tells us, amply carried and proclaimed abroad with miraculous evidence, as we know, and with conviction of the Spirit in the consciences of men. But there was also most intense labour and exertion on the part of those who had begun to publish them, and were publishing them still. There was most earnest inquiry and solemn deliberation on the part of those who had first embraced or were still embracing them. And while the numbers of such were prosperously increasing, the Gospel testimony continued still in the hearts and lives of them all, productive, as from the beginning, of holy and blessed effects the most abundant and

most abiding. All this crowd of ideas the Evangelist certainly means to convey in the passage, and they all come easily within the significance and scope of that one expressive term, *πεπληροφορημένα*.

This large comprehension, and sweeping range of the Scripture phraseology, it is needful for us to keep in view while considering the "assurance of grace and salvation" as spoken of in the "Westminster Confession."\* For in the terms of that excellent summary of Christian doctrine itself, while a clear and unerring certainty of being a child of God, and an heir of glory, is what the assurance of a Christian STRICTLY means, yet there is reference made to a wide circuit of truths and benefits, and exercises, and experiences, through the medium of which only that certainty can legitimately and actually be reached, and without taking account of which, therefore, its real nature cannot be understood. A *plerophoria* of many things, both within and without the believer, must be pre-supposed before that happy condition be attained, in which he pursues the voyage, and enters the haven of his salvation, borne onward by the powerful impulse of a certainty at once sound and infallible that he is the Lord's.

I. And, first of all, it is necessary but to glance at what is outward to the believer,—that abundant flow of means and influences, coming forth from God, which we have seen the Evangelist Luke had in his eye when alluding to the success of the Gospel. The blessed Word of Inspiration, that unfolds the whole plan and working of the love of God in Christ Jesus, as it bows the heavens and comes down to effect the redemption of His people—the sure proofs so multiplied and varied, that it is the Word of God, indeed,—the ordinances of the Gospel, so full, so instructive, so persuasive—the fellowship of saints—the ministry of angels—the entire providence of God over the world,

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\* As no single English word expresses fully the sense of the original, we shall use the original term in English characters.

expressly designed to call forth the spiritual powers and virtues of believing men, until they are fully numbered and matured—these are the *plerophoria* of means by which God bears the Christian onward to the full assurance, ere he has yet reached the full enjoyment of his blessedness. Yet the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is by far an ampler benefit than the whole of these together. It is that which infuses a Divine energy into them all. Through them it brings all the resources of an infinite power and sufficiency to bear upon the character and condition of the Christian, and is able to speed his soul along its spiritual course, even as Philip was caught up in the way of Gaza, and found at Azotus; until the time arrive, when, like Elijah, it shall translate him, only disembodied, to his home in glory. The free communication, in answer to his prayers, of all spiritual gifts and graces, limited only by what, in the eye of Divine wisdom, are his capacities and wants, this is to him the *plerophoria* of the Holy Ghost. In short, as it pleased the Father that in Christ all His fulness should dwell, (Col. i. 19,) both Word and Spirit, so it was also His gracious will, that, by the effusion of both, believers, after their measure, should likewise be filled with His fulness, and should even, in the days of their vanity, as many as He saw meet, be cheered with the sure and certain hope of eternal bliss.

II. This amplitude of effectual means, both visible and invisible, may well be compared to that “plentiful rain, whereby Thou, O God, didst confirm Thine inheritance when it was weary. Thou hast prepared of Thy goodness for the poor.” (Ps. lxxviii. 9.) Yet we must distinguish between this external abundance as a bounty of God, and the riches of its efficiency in the hearts of believers, as a benefit appropriated and enjoyed. In itself it is a sovereign influence, a mighty agency, worthy of Him from whom it proceeds; yet its peculiar glory, as a means, lies in the triumphant success and fulness with which its ends

are brought to pass. It is of its own nature ■ majestic river, broad, deep, resistless; but its special praises are seen where "its streams make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." Here, in the spiritual Jerusalem, in the living temple, all built of lively stones, regenerate souls, that have found and confessed their Lord, the Scripture speaks expressly of a three-fold *plerophoria*, produced by those abundant means from without, and necessarily infers more. Let us attempt to trace them in their order.

1. There is, first, the *plerophoria of knowledge*, the full and sure comprehension of all things necessary to salvation. This is attainable by the Christian. Already informed that the Scriptures are dictated by the Spirit of God, he sets himself, with reliance on the inward teaching of that same Spirit, as a newborn babe, to receive the sincere milk of the Word, that he may grow thereby. (1 Peter ii. 2.) If he possess the advantages of learning, so as to exercise on what he reads a critical judgement, in the ordinary sense of that phrase, it is well. But there are broad and firm grounds of understanding and conviction laid in the Sacred Volume, distinct altogether from the evidence, however important and precious, to be found in that other field of knowledge. They were not all erudite and cultivated men in the Churches of Colosse and Sardinia, but, doubtless, many of them plain and humble disciples merely, for whom Paul had that great conflict in prayer, "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance (*plerophoria*) of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." (Col. ii. 2.) The *literature* of those Christian societies must have been limited to few, but the *assurance of understanding*, according to these words, was to be a bond of union among many. Inspired men, it is true, were their teachers; but so are they the teachers also, by their

writings, of every child of God. And when the believer, with prayer for Divine illumination, lays open his soul to the impression of their words, soon is he made sensible that it is God who speaks. The Sovereign Understanding imparts light to his understanding, such as it never has received from earthly instructors, and causes him to feel the difference. He that made him, informs him, and therefore he *knows*. The process, indeed, is in entire accordance with the laws of his intellectual nature. It is as his reading extends that his knowledge enlarges. It is as his reflections multiply that his thoughts become distinct, and his hold of the truth grows firm and confident. He peruses the history of Moses, with the annals of all the olden time; and delights in the aids which an acquaintance with these afford him, in understanding the doctrine and life of Christ and his Apostles, when he comes to read the New Testament. Enlightened by the discoveries of the Gospel age, he admires the lustre which, in turn, they shed upon all the ways of God with His people, in the days and dispensations long gone by. Let times and circumstances vary as they may, he finds it is one God throughout, and His truth one. He meditates on the songs of David and of Moses, in which they celebrate the Divine praises, and “open their dark sayings on the harp” (Ps. xlix. 4); and it surprises him to perceive how perfectly their words suit the lips of Christ, as in the days of His flesh He stands worshipping with the multitude in the synagogue, or rejoicing on the mount of transfiguration, or suffering on the cross. He sees how it is that, when they are employed to utter the thoughts of the Saviour’s heart, *then* and not sooner, the full glory of their meaning shines out; and he learns how it is that, thus illustrated and explained, they are adequate to express the feelings of His people, in all their variety and in every age, when lifting up their souls, with what fervour and enlargement soever, unto God their Saviour. The announcements of

prophecy—how do they display the wisdom and righteousness of God when the events which they predicted have come to pass ! The events when accomplished and recorded—how do they clear away the obscurities which hung, by design, around the prophetic word while unfulfilled ! And how does the light thus redoubled concentrate its rays especially on the period of the Lord's advent, and scatter them again beyond it, over all the great occurrences of succeeding times ! The instruction and the certainty imparted to the Believer by this process of comparing Scripture with Scripture, and the Word of God with His works, is greatly confirmed by his increasing appreciation of particular portions of the holy oracles. He peruses some epistle of Paul, and feels, as he follows his just, and clear, and consecutive statements, or yields to the cogency of his profound and accurate reasonings, that surely he could not have been so instructed unless he had apprehended ; he could not so rest satisfied unless he had understood. Or he studies the pages of John, the Son of thunder—he reads with awe those broad and bold asseverations bearing on his spiritual condition and final destiny, which seeming to scorn all distinctions, all limitations—“like the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, and shineth unto the other part under heaven”—are yet found, when brought together, and understood consistently with each other, to proclaim the very truths which he has elsewhere learned, in precise accordance with all the rest of the inspired record ;—these he considers deeply, and is satisfied that, as a disciple of the Lord Jesus, he cannot have mistaken the import of a Scripture that has applied to his soul, as this has done, the stimulus of warnings the most solemn, and encouragements the most animating, combined with the informations of a doctrine the most express and definite, according to the Gospel.

It were not easy to enumerate all the ways in which the Scriptures, looking simply to their own contents, not merely



surround all vital truths with the characters of precision and certainty, but convey to the humble and honest inquirer the instinctive perception, as it were, that they come from God. To both intents, however, fresh evidence is supplied, from their perfect adaptation to his *moral* nature—for we have hitherto been speaking chiefly of his intellectual. These truths, when brought to bear upon his thoughts and ways, grapple closely with his inmost conscience, and when he sins, make him feel that he is wrestling against God. These truths enter into the hidden recesses of his heart, and there reveal evils which, without them, would have remained a secret, but, by means of them, are certainly known to be there. These truths, when resisted, or attempted to be set aside, make him doubly miserable under a sense of wilful perversity and guilt that admits of no palliation. These truths, when accepted, embraced, obeyed, are instantly felt to pervade his whole frame like some sovereign cordial: they soothe his most inward anxieties; they satisfy his most earnest longings; they heal the sorest sicknesses, the deepest wounds; they preserve, they nourish the health and strength of his very soul. All this not only reveals itself to the consciousness of the individual; it repeats itself in all that he can observe or learn of the experience of others. It matters nothing in how many respects men otherwise may differ; if they are one in the reception of this doctrine, their thoughts and feelings also he finds become essentially one. Whether the convert is drawn from the ranks of the great and wealthy, or from among the multitudes of the labouring poor—whether the truth reached him in the primitive age, a warrior of Rome, a philosopher of Greece; or whether it illuminated his darkness but yesterday when roaming the African desert a rude and blind savage, still receiving this gospel he is seen to undergo a change, and in every case the same change,—his heart is renovated, his life is reformed. When our contemplative believer considers these

testimonies together, whether they be direct from Scripture, or intuitive in his own bosom, or reflected from the experience of his fellow-disciples, and finds them unite in confirming the doctrine that man is by nature corrupt and undone—that God is merciful, but perfectly just—that, sent by Him, Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Man, died to atone for sin—that who-soever believeth in him is justified, regenerated, chastened, and rising from the dead, is received into glory—to what rational, or sober, or sound conclusion can he come, but just that the doctrine first is true, and next that it is truth from God? These two inferences are, from the nature of the case, inseparable, and, therefore, with the clearest reason, they both become the objects of his sure and abiding conviction. A witness greater than his best reason, far greater,—and truer than his sincerest judgment—far truer,—adds certainty to this, his most certain knowledge. The Spirit of God, that presided over every step of the inquiry presides equally over the result. The Heavenly Power which sustained his mind in seeing and accepting each several proof in detail, will surely sustain it no less, or rather, indeed, as the case requires, will sustain it much more in summing up the testimony, in comprehending, recognising, appreciating the whole—yes—the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, (Eph. i. 17,) will seal His own testimony in the believer's heart, and by an energy unseen in its working, but infallible in its effect, will possess his soul with all the riches of the full assurance of understanding of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.

2. The second branch of the Christian's *plerophoria* is the full assurance of *faith*. With this, as well as with a true heart, a good conscience, and a spotless life, the Apostle would have us draw near to the holiest. (Heb. x. 22.) The knowledge of which we have been speaking lies at the foundation of faith, and contributes largely to its full assurance; yet it may exist,

at least in great measure, where faith has no place. It is true, in illustrating knowledge merely as such, we made no scruple to dwell not a little upon the feelings and experiences of believing men, because these constitute a part, and a most important part of the *objective* truth which the knowledge of the Gospel considered simply as speculative, clearly comprises. But faith has a hold of that same truth, different from that of intellect. Conviction may be fully established, where faith has never entered. In this sense "the devils believe and tremble." (James ii. 19.) Then how does faith receive the truth? As a thing of power and of action:—a thing of power that it may possess and quicken and modify the whole soul—a thing of action that it may direct and animate and sustain the whole life. Faith not only *understands* the Gospel, but embraces and harbours it—not only counts it true, but ventures all upon its truth—not only deems it right, but chooses and puts on its rectitude. The living Christian, in virtue of his faith, no longer regards the truth as mere material for constructing a sublime and beautiful system, but much rather as the means of bringing him into a holy and saving relation with that God in whose hand his breath is, and whose *fiat* must determine his everlasting weal or woe. In this mind, seeking daily to the sources of Scriptural instruction, how surely does he learn that through Christ and not otherwise "he hath access by the Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. ii. 18.) The truth of Christ leads him directly to the person of Christ. Faith in his words turns to faith in Himself. "There is one God and one Mediator betwixt God and man, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. ii. 5); therefore in Jesus he puts his trust. That He is the Lord's Anointed—that His are power and wisdom truly Divine—that human thoughts, affections, and sympathies, the most perfect in their nature, dwell with Him—that His death is a true atonement for sin, a veritable exhaustion of the curse—that His resurrection is the pledge, and His royalty

the source of life and holiness to His people, through the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, that He invites all sinners, without exception, to believe in Him, and that whosoever believes, He will in nowise cast him out, but bring him to the Father; all these things, from the first, lay a firm foundation for the Christian's faith in Him; but as his knowledge of them enlarges, as his conceptions of them are heightened and confirmed, his faith also gathers confidence and strength. Experience, moreover, testing their reality by actual trial, from day to day, from year to year, supplies the best of all means for turning persuasion into certainty, and fostering hopeful trust into absolute reliance. Once a perishing sinner, he obeyed the invitation, and came to the Lord; he was not cast out. He said, "I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord;" and the Lord forgave the iniquity of his sin; he found peace with God. Alarmed at the power of his lusts, through which Satan had hitherto led him captive at his will, he cried earnestly for the aids of God's Spirit; and though his graces were still weak, yet his bondage was broken. Still, as his spiritual discernment and tenderness of conscience increase, he becomes more and more alive to the enormity of his guilt—more sensible daily of his own utter helplessness in the face of temptation—but putting daily to the proof, through earnest supplication, the efficacy of Christ's blood to take away sin, and the grace and power of the Holy Ghost to maintain and advance the life of righteousness, he finds the riches of each, for their several ends, to be absolutely inexhaustible. The courage and strength thus acquired are not long left without exercise. Occasions soon arise that not only employ, not only prove, but it may be, far overmatch them. If he would hold fast his integrity, there are sacrifices to be made, the prospect of which, even in the distance, fills him with dismay. Unless he would cast his soul away, there are toils and dangers to be undergone, in the presence of which he feels like

one who should have been enjoined, by the labour of his own hands, to remove mountains. Inevitably, however, the crisis comes on; the tide of troubles overtakes him; it is as if the ocean had risen from its bed, and swept him away; all counsel and strength of man are utterly vain; it is much if he can say, "the Lord is in this tempest, and He is able to save."—But, perhaps, his very thoughts are scattered, his heart is overwhelmed, and, as regards any spiritual effort, all his bones are out of joint. Ah! how many a child of God has found the case his own. But is he then forsaken? Does he perish? No. When he is far too weak to keep his hold on Christ, Christ lays his hand of might upon him. Hence, while all the waves and billows of God pass over him,—while he sinks in deep mire where there is no standing,—while he feels as if some monster of the nether deep had swallowed him up like Jonah, yet a secret power keeps his soul alive, just when it is fainting within him. Then, by a gracious movement of the Spirit he remembers the Lord. By reason of his affliction he cries unto the Lord; out of the belly of hell he cries, and the Lord hears his voice. Through some means, perhaps the least expected, comes deliverance. But well he knows where the thanksgiving is due. "The waters," he exclaims, "compassed me about even to the soul, the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains, the earth, with her bars, was about me for ever; yet hast Thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed; salvation is of the Lord." (Jonah ii.)

To multiply instances were unnecessary. It is enough that the life of a Christian from first to last is but a series of events, all of which find exercise for his faith, while many are trials in the strictest sense, varying endlessly in their nature, conditions, intensities, but all having this in common, that, sins and failings

notwithstanding, victory is the ordinary result of conflict, and the blessed fact grows every day more distinct and more unquestionable to his consciousness, that neither does he cease to place his trust in the Lord, nor does the Lord cease to preserve and to strengthen him; *but* that, on the contrary, through the power of grace, "as he has received Christ Jesus the Lord, so does he walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as he hath been taught, abounding therein with thankfulness." (Col. ii. 6.) And while centering thus in the person of the Lord Jesus, his faith expands through Him its reverential regard to all that is God, or that comes of God. By faith the Father is his Father, the Holy Spirit is his Paraclete. By faith the revelations of God are his light, the mercies of God are his refuge, the commands of God are his law, the threatenings of God are his dread, the promises of God are his soul's treasure, the works of God are his wonder and his joy. Love consequently springs up in his heart, and spreads apace—love to God and to his people. His earthly affections are tamed—he grows heavenly-minded. He is humble; he is patient; he is constant; he resists the devil, he overcomes the world. His faith has borne fruit. Through all the range of temporal and of spiritual things, wherein he lives, and moves, and has his being, he finds that the words of the Lord, which meet him every where, "are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times." (Ps. xii. 6.) All that they undertook to do for him is realized; all that they promised to work by him is achieved, and when the whole length, and breadth, and height, and depth of this experience is considered, the immense variety of its ordinary tests, the rigours and fierceness of its sharper temptations, the clearness and certainty of its holy results, to what conclusion should the soberest judgment of the lowliest believer come,—to say nothing of the tendencies of his godly and joyful heart, but that, despite his infirmities, despite his



sins, he should trust in the Lord for ever, without restriction and without fear?—A wiser Judge, however, than his own understanding, and a stronger will than dwells in his own heart, determines that he shall so believe. The Spirit that enabled him to commit his soul to God because of His naked *word*, now strengthens him to place tenfold confidence in God, because of His mighty and gracious *deeds*. Nay, more, by showing him that He has Himself begun a good work in him indeed, he greatly fortifies his persuasion that He will carry it on till the day of Christ. He confirms his faith in abundant measure by enabling him to believe that he believes. A power, in short, that works by means of the human faculties, but works also far above and beyond them, speaks the word in his heart, “believe,” “be assured,” and it is done. All doubt, distrust, suspicion cease, while the “Spirit Himself witnesseth with his Spirit that he is a child of God.” (Rom. viii. 16.) The full assurance of faith is reached, that satisfieth his soul with marrow and with fatness, and adds wings to his swiftness in the Christian race. (Ps. lxiii. 5; Is. xl. 31.) “What shall I render unto the Lord,” is now his cry, “for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows now unto the Lord in the presence of all His people.” (Ps. cxvi. 12, 13, 14.) “They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever.” (Ps. cxxv. 1, 2.) Thus he sings with the Psalmist, and then, with the Apostle, fervently affirms, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is *able* to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” (2 Tim. i. 12. See also Rom. viii. 38, 39.)

3. The third branch of the Christian *plerophoria*, is that of *hope*; concerning which we have no room but for a few leading

observations. In the Greek language *ἐλπίς* (hope), with its kindred terms, may signify the expectation of either good or evil to come; but with respect to the subject before us, like *hope* in our own language, it has reference to good only. This grace in the heart of a Christian, is founded on his true desire after spiritual blessings, yet, in prospect, combined with the understanding and belief, that through Christ he may certainly attain them. Of course, it is susceptible of innumerable gradations, from the slight emotion in which hope can scarcely be distinguished from wishing, up to that state of clear and confident anticipation, in which the blessing becomes so near and so sure as to be less wished for, almost, than enjoyed. It is evident, from the very nature of hope, that its increase and stability are most intimately dependent upon the progress of both knowledge and faith. As to knowledge—if the benefits of grace and salvation be but dimly seen and feebly appreciated, they will not awaken the strong desires through which alone strong hope is possible; or if the benefits indeed be longed for, but the only way of reaching them, the way of access to Christ, and through Christ to God,—if this be not clearly and firmly apprehended, then there is not sufficient likelihood or certainty of success for a confident hope to build on. As to faith, again, it is the effort of mind and heart, by which alone we take hold of Christ, and of eternal life in Him. Without faith, we are without God, and therefore without *hope* in the world. But the moment that a real trust in the Son of God is exercised; at least as soon as it is sufficiently decided to become a subject of consciousness, it is hardly possible that some proportionate measure of hope should not arise. Certain it is, at all events, that when the believer has, on Scriptural grounds, been satisfied that he does verily believe, and that consequently the Divine faithfulness is pledged for his salvation, then hope begins to assume a boldness corresponding to the strength of the foundation on which it rests. It is

indispensable, however, to the full assurance of hope, as it is also to that of faith, and indeed of knowledge, that the heart and life be not only delivered from the *dominion* of every sin, and conformed in some good measure to the image of Christ, but that they have also put on the abiding characters of a matured and tested holiness. Of this we need no better proof than the connexion in which the Apostle introduces the very phrase, the *plerophoria* (full assurance) of hope. What is the process through which he exhorts the Hebrews to advance their Christian hope to its full perfection? (vi. 9.) After referring to the barren ground that is nigh to cursing, "But beloved," he adds, "we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to *the full assurance of hope* unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Here the Apostle points out as the true path to an infallible certainty, both of persevering grace and final glory, not only that men put off the habits of a slow, dull, unfruitful life; but that they follow the steps of those who through patience, as well as faith, that is, through the endurance of severe and long-continued trials, have reached at last the fulfilment of their eternal hope. Then the particular instance in which he commends the diligence of the Hebrews as tending to the like consummation, is not without its peculiar significance. In those days, ministering to the saints, that is most especially owning those who zealously preached Christ, supplying their necessities, hospitably entertaining them, preparing the way for their labours, commending, justifying them, suffering along with them—this implied the exercise of not

one, or a few, but many, Christian virtues, and these the severest and most self-denying. The book of Acts and the Epistles, prove clearly by many examples, that poverty, persecution, exile, bonds and death, might easily follow in their train; and yet by these it was that the disciples of Christ, long perhaps before they should reach the goal of mortality, were, by Paul's advice, to make their calling and election sure. No doubt, after knowledge, and faith, and godly living, under all advantages of word and ordinance, had done all that could be done in the way of reasonable evidence or ardent affection to exalt and to establish hope, it is still the Holy Spirit alone that can elevate it to the height of a triumphant and infallible assurance. It is only by that grace wherein we stand, that we can rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. (Rom. v. 2.) But there is, as we have seen, a *plerophoria*, not only of all outward advantages, but of the Spirit too, through the rich enjoyment of which as perfecting their knowledge, their faith, and their holiness, and by means of them, and yet by a power far above and beyond them, perfecting their hope also, multitudes of believers, compassed about with fiery trials, and in the very presence of death, have been enabled to testify, with Paul, "their earnest expectation, and their hope, that in nothing they should be ashamed, but that with all boldness, always, Christ should be magnified in their bodies, whether it were by life or by death." (Phil. i. 20.) And that "having fought a good fight, having finished their course, having kept the faith, there was laid up for them a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, should give them in that day."

## LECTURE XXVIII.

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### THE LAW

#### MORAL AND NATURAL.

THE Apostle Paul declares, concerning the Gentiles, that having not the law, they are a law unto themselves. (Rom. ii, 14.) Though destitute of authoritative rule from without, there is that in the very structure of their moral nature, which hath power over their actions both to guide and to constrain. How much more is the Author of their frame, the prototype after which all that is good in it was formed, the Divine possessor of all perfections—how much more is *He* a law unto Himself! When infinite wisdom and sovereign power meet—where truth, and rectitude, and goodness without end, are conjoined, conjoined in one unchangeable Being that inhabits eternity and fills immensity, from whom, while Himself unoriginated, all things originate that are—what rule can possibly arise for that Being to follow but just the counsel of His own will? What liberty can be so absolute as that, with which His will chooses and performs? What purpose, or what procedure, can be so immutable as that which His will has once resolved on and begun? (Ps. cxv. 3.; cxxxv. 6.)

Creation being supposed as a manifest work of this sovereignty; and as the most excellent portion of this work, a *rational* creation, it follows instantly, and of necessity, that the same all-wise good pleasure of God, which is His own rule in all things, should, in that particular branch of it, which concerns

the manner of life and ultimate ends of His rational creature, be the rule of that creation also. Every being of this description, so far as our conceptions reach, owes its distinguishing excellence to a participation of the Divine image. Intelligence, affection, conscience, power of choice, freedom of action, things which are its essential attributes, and failing which, it would cease to be reasonable, or the subject, properly speaking, of *any* law; what are these but just the likenesses of those very perfections in God who gave it existence? They are good in their measure, as holding of the like attributes in God, which are good above measure. When, therefore, there exists, as there ever does, a communion, an intercourse of the created spirit with the Uncreated, where should the limited understanding find its true and right exercise but in conformity with the Unlimited? Where should the generated love be rightly moved but in fellowship with the primary and original love? Where should the fallible uprightness find support, but in adherence to the infallible; or the frail will and failing strength, but in submissive reliance on that will and strength which are uncontrollable and inexhaustible? The reasonable soul, in short, being what it is—its relations to the surrounding universe being what they are—the name of Him from whom the whole proceeded, and on whom all every moment depends, being alone Jehovah, “I am that I am,” it springs from the very constitution of nature, as, in fact, it stands, that the will of God should be the rule of life to His intelligent offspring. (Ps. xix. 7, 8, 9, 10.)

And a little farther reflection may suffice to show, that not merely the rule itself, but also the sanctions annexed to it, by which it ceases to rank as mere counsel or instruction, and assumes the character of cogent and authoritative law, result by an equal necessity from the very nature of things. For, first, as to reward;—while the created spirit continues obedient, that is, while his mind, will, and heart, and strength, are all with



God, it is little more than an identical proposition to say, that God is with him. The correspondencies on one side and on the other, are correlatives. The harmonies are mutual. As long as the creature sees light in God's light,—loves him supremely for his own excellency and for the love which he hath shown,—adopts, embraces the will of God to be his own will, and pursues the work of God as being his own proper and most necessary work—as long, in short, as he glorifies God by conforming in all things to what he is—so long does God approve *him*, accept *him*, delight in *him*—so long it is the native movement of the Divine benignity to flow forth upon him unchecked and unmingled—so long it concerns the Divine truthfulness to meet and gratify the hopes which foregone kindness has awakened; and although the creature can lay claim to no reward upon the score of justice, seeing he hath given nothing but what he had first received, yet justice is not offended, she looks complacently on, while goodness is enlarging her favours. Meanwhile, the obedient soul is in health, it is in league with all that is holy and gracious in the world—it rejoices inwardly—it rejoices in God. Now, this is the reward provided in the law for obedience. This is life. (Ps. xviii. 24, 25, 26.) Equally the result of natural causes, in the second place, is the punishment of sin. For any rational and accountable being to rebel against God, is for him not only to leave his place of safety, but actually to step in beneath the falling rock that must grind him to powder. If the narrow and feeble understanding prefer another wisdom to the wisdom that is Infinite, and choose a way that must be wrong, seeing that of God is right, does it not so enter on a course of hopeless error and weary wandering, to be swallowed up in utter darkness, and there to go for ever astray in a labyrinth interminable? If the heart withdraw its trust and love from Him that is most excellent, most adorable, the all-sufficient, the all-bountiful, to fix them on created objects that have no goodness

but from God, and that lose what they have when separated from Him, much more when staked against Him, is not this to forsake the fruits of paradise and feed on ashes? If the creature resolve to will against God's will, and work against God's work, what is this but to choose the Almighty for an adversary, to challenge Him to battle, and to enter with Him into direct and endless contest? He that will break through the world's instituted order, to the injury of his fellow-creature, and will bear false testimony against his Maker, calling His wisdom folly, His bounty barrenness, His righteousness iniquity, His authority usurpation—the thing which practically all sinners do; *he* shall find that it pertains to the very nature of God's justice to avenge the wrong, and to the very nature of His truth and goodness to confound the blasphemy. Of judgment and decision, doubtless, but primarily of nature, wrath shall come upon him in the just measure of his provocations. Now, this is the punishment threatened by the law for disobedience. This is death.

After these remarks upon the *origin* of law, both in precept and sanction, we may next advert to its *revelation*—limiting ourselves, however, at present, to the single but very interesting point of its revelation to Adam on the day of his first formation. That the will of God may be law to His subjects, it is necessary that He make it known to them; and, assuming that He has once, in the freedom of His holy working, created a moral agent, it seems scarcely more natural that He should HAVE a will for that agent to walk by, than that He should disclose it. The being and faculties of such a creature were imparted and fashioned for the express purpose of fulfilling his Maker's law, and unless it could consist with the perfections of God to nullify His own work and frustrate His own design, it clearly concerned His goodness, when He had created, to instruct also. Knowledge is a necessary of life to the intelligent nature. It is the only element on which its powers can expand or act. As soon as it has being,

it has need of this medium to live and move in. Doubtless, therefore, it was immediately supplied; and it were as credible, that, when forming the world, God should have given animal life, yet withheld the element that supports it; should have stationed the inhabitants of the dry land at the bottom of the sea, or cast the fishes upon the mountain tops, as that he should have formed spiritual and moral beings, yet left them in ignorance and not instantly compassed them about with the light of knowledge and understanding. Many things, it is true, could safely be left to the slow discoveries of observation and experience; but by far the most important things were not of this description, and whatever was, from the first moment of their conscious existence necessary to their spiritual being and well-being, so that in their peculiar and wonderful circumstances, they might at once act wisely, holily, responsibly, which is the specialty of their nature, that we may be sure was communicated to them by instant inspiration. God did not make the first man, as to his body, like a new-born infant, and leave him in that condition to provide for his own bodily wants; much less, assuredly, did he first create and then desert his intelligent soul.

The *amount* of knowledge, and sense, and sagacity, requiring to be thus immediately given, is much greater than may at first sight be apparent. The sovereign attributes, the creative work, and the preserving providence of God, which constitute the ground of His authority over us as a Lawgiver, and must be known before we can recognise the duty of obedience, are themselves, even in the most limited conceptions of them that can be true, subjects of enlarged and solemn thought. Then the world, in which the reasonable creature is to dwell, and where the scene of his activity is laid, is also a vast and complicated system, many of the arrangements of which are in contact on every side not only with his general welfare, but with his moral agency—insomuch that, from the first moment when he takes

his place in it, a knowledge of its nature, in many important particulars, is necessary, in order to his finding immediately, as he needs to find the right and holy use of his peculiar endowments. In short, as he has the God of glory to contemplate on high, and the frame of things to apprehend around him, before he can become even conscious of the law which must prompt and guide his earliest footsteps, it is evidently not a few abstract notions, nor a few fragmentary perceptions, but a just and connected understanding of many important facts and relations, in detail, accompanied, too, by experience of the sentiments and impulses that pertain to them, with which his spirit must be furnished at its very creation, and by direct revelation from God, in order that he may start on the journey of existence with adequate security from going astray at the outset—and may, thereafter, pursue it, in endless progression, with ever-growing prosperity and safety. Whosoever will consider the provision continually made by means of instinct for the preservation of the lower animals, will not be startled by the notion of such a temporary interposition on behalf of nobler natures. There is, besides, instruction as well as illustration in the analogy between bodily and spiritual things in our own constitution; and we probably err but little, if at all, in believing that, just as the bodily eye of Adam, when it first awoke to sense, opened at once upon the glory of the light, beheld, on the instant, the body of heaven in its clearness, and surveyed, with sudden distinctness, all the grandeur and beauty of the surrounding landscape:—so the eye of his soul also, the moment that intelligence and conscious feeling stirred within him, was wrapped at once into the vision of God's own excellency, and filled with a calm and clear intuition of man's high place and glorious office in creation.

Arrived at this stage of the inquiry, and only supposing farther that man was from the beginning endowed with moral sensibility and the power of just reflection, we are not far from

the conclusion, if indeed we have not quite reached it, that the law of love to his Great Author and Benefactor, and in subordination to that, the law of a meet regard and disposition toward all the creatures associated with him, according to their several natures, was already revealed to him, already written in his heart. We are not precluded, however, from the belief that the inferences of his own mind to that effect, were enlarged and confirmed by direct and explicit communications of the Divine will from God in person. On the contrary, Scripture indicates, not obscurely, that such communications were vouchsafed him. Taking it for granted that he understood the earth to be the source of his subsistence, and understood the necessity of his own care and culture to make it duly fruitful, we can scarcely imagine that the Lord God, then visibly present and communing with him by speech, as Moses testifies, should not impart some more express commands in this particular, when He "took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress and to keep it." (Gen. ii. 15.) Allowing that the same instinctive knowledge, by which Adam was enabled, on the first day of his existence, to give appropriate names "to all cattle, unto the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field" (ver. 20), was sufficient to inform him also of his own superiority over them; yet it is natural to think, and we shall find the likelihood confirmed, that when the Lord God brought them to Adam to see what he would call them (ver. 19), there would not fail to be some significant intimation of His own previous decree regarding all such creatures, and in favour of the human race—"Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth" (i. 26);—*dominion*, implying duty as well as privilege. When the Lord God took a rib out of Adam's side, and made that rib the woman; and when Adam understood that, derived from them both, God should

make "of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts xvii. 26), doubtless he would perceive his obligation to love that whole race into which he should thus be multiplied and expanded, even as he loved himself. But did the far-reaching import of this obligation receive no direct confirmation or evidence, when the Lord God brought the woman unto him (ii. 22); "and God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth"? Surely this admonition extended the domain of love, not only throughout all the *relations* of men, but also throughout all their occupations, and all their enjoyments. And why, once more, was all this fulness of holiness and felicity lavished upon the children of the dust? Whence did they inherit it? How were they capable of enjoying it? Because of that glorious model on which they were formed. For so ran the decree—"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish, the fowl, the cattle, over all the earth, and every creeping thing." (i. 26.) Was Adam ignorant of this fact? or, knowing it, could he fail to understand perfectly where all his homage, love, obedience, were due? When he beheld that Divine brightness, and saw its impress in his own frame—when he heard that heavenly voice, and felt a response to all its utterances in his inmost soul—when he looked around on the wondrous world of which he found himself appointed Lord, and looked up to that Eternal Majesty that made all, and gave all, and upheld all by the bounteousness of His will, surely the requirement, if it were framed in words, would be received joyfully—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart;" or, if not spoken, would be understood, and ratified, and embraced by all that was within him. When night closed down for



the first time upon a world now finished and complete, and the sun rose at his appointed hour, and when the evening and the morning were the seventh day,—how natural to him would it appear that God should rest that day from all His works which He had made, and that God should bless the seventh day and should sanctify it, because in it He rested from all His work, which God created and made! How gracious to him would appear the appointment that man, too, released from all other thoughts, should delight and refresh himself that day with the contemplation and fellowship of his Creator! And at the close, when all its hours had passed away, in the exercise of that holy and joyful love of God, of his companion, and of every creature, which was thenceforth to be the rule of his being, with what fervour, far surpassing that of his devout descendant, would he exclaim, “O! how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day.”

Hitherto it is the moral law alone of which we have been speaking. The positive law, the law of institutions and ordinances superinduced upon the moral, will require our attention afterwards. We have seen, I trust, that the rule, the sanctions, nay, even in a manner the revelation or discovery of law in regard to man in his original perfection, were all natural—natural in the theological sense, the sense in which Paul asks, “Doth not even nature itself teach you?” (1 Cor. xi. 14); and in which our Lord demands of the Jews (Luke xii. 57), “Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?”—such, in the Christian import of the phrase, is the law of nature: that which springs from the nature of God and of man, and of all creation united, according to the relations towards one another, in which at any given time they stand. How different from the law of nature in the hands of unbelieving Philosophy! She builds her precepts and sanctions upon merely the relations of mankind to this world and to their fellow-men, and these most imperfectly understood

—or if the being and providence of God are taken into account at all, it is under views the most incomplete and often the most erroneous. Claiming for her own wisdom the praise of discovering all moral truth, how strange and baseless are her accounts of the revealing process. Not content with the simpler and more obvious fictions that represent the early fathers of mankind as living dispersed and solitary in the forests, feeding on roots and berries, and holding scarcely a more rational or more intimate fellowship with each other than with the brutes; but afterwards, from some causes hard to be assigned or apprehended, becoming by degrees associated in families, cities, nations, inventing arts,—enacting laws, and striking out at length the lights of Divine philosophy—not satisfied with these, she will now, as much as in the days of blind heathenism, trace man's history through uncounted myriads of the ages gone by, finding him first a dead particle, detecting him next a sentient monad, pursuing him thence into a zoophite, a mollusc, a phoca, a quadruped, an ape, a man, and advancing him at last to the possession of faculties and powers far above human, if not blasphemous by investing him with the name and honours of Very Godhead! Strange labour of the ungodly heart to shut the Creator out of His universe, or, if that cannot be, to sit side by side with him upon his throne. O how much more rational as well as pious is the wise man's philosophy (Eccl. vii. 29), "Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." Yes, "upright," a moral, and, therefore, of necessity, an intelligent and enlightened being. God "made him" so. From the first hour that he was anything he was that. In the moment of his creation it was natural,—agreeable, that is, to the nature of God that he should be created. In the moment of his first spiritual activity, it was natural, that is, accordant with his frame, and worthy of his Maker's wisdom and goodness, that he should be instructed. In the day of his

installation as lord of this lower world, under the sovereignty of a Heavenly Lord, it was natural that his Great King should stand visibly before him,—should inform his ear, his voice, his intellect, with the power of speech,—should claim his homage,—should confer his privileges,—should dictate the rules of his obedience. It was natural, as soon as human cogitation had time to reflect, and as soon as human converse became possible, by the severance of one person into two, that each of these should contribute to the illumination of the other in mind and conscience. And, but for man's sad apostasy, why should not all these things have continued natural still? Doubtless, had primeval innocence endured, when individuals should be growing into families, and families should be branching forth into tribes, and tribes should be multiplying into mighty nations; when sea and land, in all climes, should be receiving their human inhabitants; when the concerns of men should be deepening, and their connexions and mutual dependencies becoming on every hand more diversified, multitudinous, and intricate, then, without question, the wisdom of man, his moral discernment and comprehension, would have become mightily refined and expanded by exercise, discovering fresh rules of uprightness, adapted still to the novelty of his changing circumstances; and this were natural. But, should some question of duty arise,—which it easily might,—too deep and difficult for mere human judgment to determine with certainty, or some problem of entangled rights emerge, so new and so momentous, that it would best beseem mere human authority, instead of attempting a solution, to submit it at once to the decision of the Heavenly Majesty:—then, no less natural would it seem, in that state of spotless sanctity, that access should be had to the presence of the blessed and only Potentate, dwelling or walking visibly among His children, that He might set their dutiful and charitable doubts at rest by the utterance of His unerring lips.

In such a condition of the world occasional revelation itself would be natural, and all its moral dictates would be natural law. But all this is speculation. True! yet, not unmeaning speculation, nor alien to our experience of the actual ways of God. Even when man fell, did God forsake him? How often did He hold open converse with the Patriarchs? And when Israel journeyed through the wilderness, how constantly did He journey in the midst of them, and ever as some new conjuncture called for it, instructed their uncertainty by His commands. Nay, God has put on our flesh. For a time He dwelt among us as a man among his kindred, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Though now we see Him not, because He is ascended into glory, yet He has left His finished oracles in our hands, and given us continual access to His fellowship; and He will come again at the time appointed to take us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. O how much more excellent than all that we have been attempting to imagine of a state of earthly innocence will then be our apprehension of His law!—when not only perfected in all our native powers, but having intercourse unceasingly with angels, and with the spirits of other just men made perfect, we shall behold the King Himself in His beauty, and be continually illumined in our souls by the unerring intuitions of His wisdom, rectitude, and love. In what a glorious manner will then the moral law, the law of love, be also the law of nature to us! How much more excellently than it was even to Adam before he fell! How immeasurably beyond our present conceptions. “For now we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but

then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." Therefore, let us diligently cultivate this "knowledge in part," which is all of truth that we can here attain to; and let us earnestly seek by prayer the light of our Master's countenance, presented to our faith in the Scripture as in a glass, which is all the view of Him that we can here arrive at; and let us, by these means, provide and discipline ourselves for the faithful exercise of that prophesying in part, which is all that our ministry here is designed for, seeing this is the appointed way in which, by the mighty hand of God upon us, we may both enter ourselves, and bring many ransomed souls along with us, into the brightness, purity, and joy ineffable, of that beatific vision.

Fiat, O mi Deus, esto!

NOTE.—We were unwilling to withhold these concluding words. They were not spoken, but they show the habitual frame of the Writer's mind.

## LECTURE XXIX.

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### THE LAW POSITIVE.

THE design of last lecture was to show, in the first place, that the moral law, both in precept and sanction, springs directly and necessarily from the nature of God and of His spiritual creation, together with their relations to each other, and to the system generally of existing things :—and secondly, that, as regards our first parents—not but that the remarks apply to other intelligent creatures—the moral law was directly communicated to them in their very origin, along with what other knowledge besides may have been necessary,—not to the preservation of their spiritual well-being only,—but also from the first moment necessary to their manner of life and their responsibility as moral agents. From the care taken,—according to the Mosaic history,—to provide at once for the subsistence and enjoyments of sentient beings, even the meanest, no room is left for supposing that the noblest of earth's inhabitants should, so much as for a day, be baulked of their best and most characteristic privileges : and from what is expressly related of the communion vouchsafed them with the Creator, both by His personal presence and by speech, it is rendered undoubtedly certain that they were not left in essential matters to the slow disclosures of observation and experience, but had a sufficient, and that must have been an ample knowledge, of their nature, their condition, and their duty, communicated to them, as soon almost as they breathed,—by direct inspiration of God.



But beyond the principles and rules of moral obligation, the Sacred History assures us that our first parents had their condition more specially determined and fenced about by positive statute. Exactly to draw the distinction betwixt this latter kind of law and the former—between positive and moral, is not so easy as it might at first sight appear. Both alike spring from the nature and mutual relations of God and of His creatures. Both, as soon as known, are alike binding upon the consciences of the beings to whom they pertain. Both are intended alike to promote the glory of God, and the good of His spiritual offspring. And when due obedience has been rendered, experience may alike demonstrate the fitness of both for securing the religious and other beneficent purposes which are their ends in common. In these respects they agree,—of their differences it may suffice for the present to note the following. The moral law holds more of those relations between the Lawgiver and His subjects, which are immutable; the positive of those which are mutable, because the creature may change while God is the same. The moral law has respect more to what in man is inward and spiritual, the positive to what is bodily and external. The moral law is founded more upon considerations that belong strictly to persons; the positive more upon reasons drawn from times, circumstances, and events. The moral law rests more on grounds that are clear to our understanding and conscience; the positive more on such as lie so deeply buried beneath the multitude and complexity of things, that even when we are struck with the beauty of an institution after it has been made, it would have been impossible for us, *a priori*, to form the most distant conjecture as to whether it were at all to be given, or what it were to be. Divines, indeed, have taught that while the moral law flows directly from the perfections of God, so that to suppose it any other than it is would involve a contradiction; the positive law results in such manner from His mere good pleasure, that

its, existing exactments might have been altered, or even reversed, without prejudice to the sovereign excellency of His attributes. It may be so;—but there is at least no impiety in believing, that amidst an infinite variety of possible ordinances, which to us might appear wholly indifferent, the Divine wisdom, in freely preferring some to all the others, may have been guided by reasons flowing as truly, though less immediately, and to us less visibly, from His eternal perfection, as the weightiest commandment of the Decalogue.—In every case one thing is certain, that between the moral and the positive there is such entire consistency that they frequently meet and harmonize in one and the same precept, for example, in that of the Sabbath:—And that, in short, whatever difficulty may be found in logically defining and describing them, yet, like any adjoining two of the prismatic colours, between which, though widely dissimilar in mid-field, it is impossible for the eye to draw any precise line of demarcation when they meet, these laws, interfering and intermingling, as they do inextricably, at their metaphysical boundaries, are marked, as they actually stand in the Scriptures, with a difference express and palpable to the plainest understanding. One instance, and let it be on a point of primary importance, will be sufficient to illustrate this remark. God has given His Son, the Partaker of His Divine Essence, to die in human nature, as an atonement for sin, that whosoever believeth in Him may have eternal life. To every sinner whom this gospel reaches, it is a plain matter not only of privilege, but of moral obligation, to acknowledge his sin, and to believe with all his heart. The Saviour, before His coming, was proffered to the acceptance of the successive generations of men by promise:—since His coming, He is proffered to their acceptance by record of the Scripture. Perhaps, therefore, it might have appeared to men a thing reasonable and good, if not even absolutely binding, to celebrate this great fact from age to age, and

to profess their own duty in regard to it by some expressive symbol, some suggestive and significant ordinance of religion to be perpetually observed. Nay, it might have seemed natural, that the ceremonial, whatever it were, should undergo some change when it ceased to be anticipative and became commemorative. But that before the advent, this fact and duty should be *prefigured* by presenting bullock, sheep, or goat, for sacrifice, by confession of sin, with imposition of the sinner's hand upon the head of the victim, by slaying it with blood-shedding, and burning its flesh upon the altar; in some instances, reserving some part for food; and that, after the advent, the same things should be *commemorated* by the breaking and eating of bread, and by the pouring out and drinking of wine, that the prefiguration and the commemoration ought to be made in the shape of these precise ceremonies, and in no other; this is a conclusion, evidently, which the reasonings, and moral sense of mankind, left to themselves, would never have reached. The ordinances, once instituted, indeed, we can see their exceeding beauty; we can feel, at least, in that which pertains to us, the commemoration, their exceeding pleasantness and efficacy. But to discover that of all imaginable observances which the case could admit of, it was duty to practise just these, and duty to reject all others, were an effort of discernment and penetration far beyond the compass of our faculties. There is nothing, however, to forbid the belief, that they were actually selected and prescribed by God, just because a certain recondite morality, real, but to us inscrutable, was apparent in them to the all-comprehending, all-comparing Wisdom. To His knowledge on this supposition, they have a *native* sanctity; to our *ignorance*, they possess the sacredness of His express institution, and no more.

So much for the nature of *positive* as distinguished from *moral law*. Let us next consider the positive, as it was imposed, or conferred rather, upon our first parents. And,—

1st, In reference to the law of the weekly Sabbath, it may be sufficient, after the statements formerly made, to note, that the warrant received by Adam to devote the seventh day, that of God's complacent rest, to the highest exercise of all his powers, in blessed fellowship and converse with his Maker, free from the encroachment of every earthly charge or occupation, could not but be felt by him a most delightful and most ennobling privilege; and that, besides, if the results of recent experience be truly gathered up, and if it be a fact, that the animal frame of man and beast, by its original structure, DOES require the cessation from labour of one day in seven, in order to its continuance in vigorous health, then, to Adam, before the fall, the same interval of bodily repose must have been necessary, in order to his exemption from all experience of such exhausting toil as formed part of the curse annexed to his apostasy. In other words, if his body, while yet holy, had its powers exactly adjusted to the work of six days, with cessation on the seventh; then, to add the Sabbath to the week, would soon have induced, even in him, a sense of weariness and a state of decay, inconsistent with the perfection of primeval happiness.

2d, The grand instance of positive law, however, as affecting our first parents, is seen in the institution and conditions of the covenant of works. Let us endeavour, in an orderly series of propositions, to contemplate clearly the grounds and nature, and tendency, of this wonderful compact.

1. And in the first place, it seems in general, a result of the relation in which God stands to His rational creation, and of the beneficent rule which He exercises over them, that on certain high questions of the grace which He intends to show them, and of the allegiance which he expects at their hands, he should establish between Himself and them, when occasion arises, some such express understanding and solemn stipulation, as that which we term a covenant. *Their* limited and dependent condition,

*His* sovereign and unbounded greatness, seem to require this, if their duty is to be made manifest and their happiness secure. Take any one section of the intellectual family, be it angel, or be it man; its members form but a part, perhaps a very small part, of the mighty whole. Assume that their understanding, within its sphere, is clear and just—their moral sensibilities and inclinations perfect—their devotion to the service and glory of God entire and unreserved. Still their conduct can be guided only by what they know. Left to their own resources, their doings must be regulated wholly by such facts and considerations as lie within reach of their faculties. And yet, holding their place as one constituent portion of a vast and connected system, their actions, as well as their existence and their state, may have important bearings upon the history and welfare of other beings of whom they know nothing. Their devices, their doings, their catastrophes, originate and take effect among the other occurrences of *HIS* subject kingdom, whose counsels, descending from a bygone eternity, weave the transactions, small and great, of this whole universe into one consistent scheme, and multiply and perpetuate their glorious issues throughout an eternity to come. It is not surely for any race of finite intelligences, even the highest to have the sole direction of their own movements amid the march of such an host, to execute the designs of such a King. Could *His* entire plan be communicated to them, which, however, from their finite nature, is impossible, it might but indispose them for their limited work. Were their narrow wisdom left alone to rule their peculiar work, it might turn their efforts aside, and detach them from the general plan. To keep them fully occupied with the little, and yet firmly bound up with the vast, there is need, in addition to their natural understanding, of express command and instruction from the Lord of Hosts Himself. Without this, how could the most exalted angel be confident of his state, knowing that in vision and in power,

as related to God and God's universe, he is but a moth? To the Sovereign wisdom, therefore, is reserved the gracious and royal function of investing by means of special directions and assurances, the narrowest intelligence, if it believe Him, with the securities of unerring knowledge; and the feeblest arm, if it rely upon Him, with the force of irresistible power;—thus enabling the very humblest of His spiritual offspring, when once sent forth into His world on the pilgrimage of immortality, to advance through all the paths of what surrounds him on every side—the immense, the tremendous, and the interminable,—with fearlessness in the discharge of his duty, and with certainty in the hope of his reward. The Divine communications through which this is effected, when formally given, whether to an individual or a multitude, are what we call a covenant; of which so many examples are found in His dealing with the chosen of our race, and especially with him whom He constituted its founder.

2. In the second place, when a covenant is to be made of God with many, it seems fit and beneficial that it be made with them by means of a Covenant Head. God is one, His spiritual children are innumerable. They are classed into distinct species. They inhabit far distant worlds. Yet all must be united in subjection to Him. God could, no doubt, make His several covenant with every single spirit apart, without bringing division into His household, or perplexity into His administration of its concerns. But there is use as well as beauty in the subordination of dignities, and powers, and degrees. It humbles the loftiest of creatures to perceive first the vast inferiority of some meaner being to himself, and then to think that the difference is as nothing compared with his own infinite inferiority to God. It elevates the zeal and devotedness of some glorious Hierarchy, to find himself stationed at the head of his species, with commission to wield over them for their good a portion of the Divine sovereignty, and render his account thereafter with joy.



To him that holds the lowest place, it sweetens the sense of heavenly dominion, when he finds its nearest exercise in a creature and a subject like himself, one compassed about with the conditions, the sympathies, the infirmities of his own nature. Not only, therefore, does it appear—as it certainly does on reflection—that the sway of a few in the foremost rank over many in the second, and of these over a still larger number in the third, and so onward till we reach the lowest, is the natural gradation—the ladder, as it were, by which God condescends to His humblest creation, and by which, if you invert the process, multiplicity in the creatures aspires towards the unity of God, and minuteness in them expands itself towards His infinitude:—It multiplies, besides, the bonds of their union among themselves. It extends throughout the conveniencies of order. It diversifies the offices of love. But were the advantages of such arrangements greatly less obvious than they are, yet its existence and continual prevalence throughout every department of nature, must prove its high estimation in the judgment of God. From the hyssop that springeth out of the wall, to the cedar of Lebanon, it holds good that the leaf cleaves to the twig, the twig to the branch, the branch to the stem, while the stem strikes root into its proper soil. The labouring ant and bee have each their mother and mistress—the migrating cranes have their selected guide. There is not a herd of deer in the mountains without its leader; nor a brotherhood of lions in the forest without its lord. Among men, the wildest tribe obeys its chieftain, and the most civilised nation is governed by some master spirit. In the public intercourse of families, communities, kingdoms, with each other, the order is followed because it is indispensable; and millions transact their affairs with millions, by the conference and compact of single man with man. If we lift up our thoughts to beings of a higher order,—then listening to the Scripture, among the holy angels, we hear the “voice of the Archangel,” (1

Thes. iv. 16); among the fallen we find a *prince* of darkness. Ascending towards the throne of God itself, and remembering with reverence that created and uncreated are there indissolubly conjoined in one marvellous person, we learn how it pleased the Father, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He should gather together *in one* all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him." (Eph. i. 10.) All these facts considered, need we wonder that, purposing at the beginning to establish His covenant with mankind, it was found consistent with the wisdom, righteousness, and goodness of God, in imparting His command and promise to the whole race, that He should regard them all as summed up and represented in Adam, their common father.

3. There was very special occasion arisen why God should superadd the provisions of a positive covenant to the natural wisdom and rectitude with which he had endowed the human species in their origin. Prior to their creation, spiritual beings of a far higher rank than they, endowed with knowledge, subtilty, and power, equal, perhaps, to the very chiefest among the works of God, had fallen from their fidelity, and were now at open enmity with their Maker. The Scripture notices of their downfall are few, but explicit. Placed under some high and holy rule, their pride revolted at its exercise, and yielding to the allurements of a loftier ambition, "they kept not that their first estate." (Jude 6.) Some glorious world being assigned them as their proper domain, they deemed its provisions, if sufficient for their wants, at least not adequate to their capabilities—they coveted the riches of some lovelier clime, and resolving, at all hazards, to possess it, "*left* their own habitation." The safety of His creatures, as well as the majesty of His throne, required that God should punish the apostates according to their deeds: "He spared not, therefore, the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be

reserved unto judgment. (2 Pet. ii. 4.) The darkness of evil spirits consists, we must think, partly in ignorance, error, confusion of mind, and partly in a gloomy revelation, and, certainty, with regard chiefly to the nature and purposes of God. These chains,—what else can they be than the bondage of those malignant and miserable passions that spring from such blindness of the intellect in corrupted natures? Certain it is, at least, that the fetters and bars of their confinement were never of such a kind as to prevent their invasion of this earth, or their attempting to inflict upon man, even in his first innocence, the worst cruelties which envy, despair, and malice could suggest. Their imprisonment, without hope, in the dungeon of their own guilt, and perversity, and wretchedness, was probably the very cause why they should seek, with exasperated rage and bitterness, to avenge their quarrel with God by the destruction of His favoured child. There was, therefore, special reason here for surrounding Adam with the defences of a covenant beyond the ordinary necessities which arise from the measureless disproportion between God's universal plan and the unaided sufficiencies of any created thing. There was more to be here provided for than simple defect of knowledge and strength. Here, there were positive enemies to be armed against. There was infernal stratagem to be counteracted. There were imminent and most formidable dangers to be met, with all just and reasonable means of safeguard. Nor was the crafty and wicked one to have any advantage left him of assailing the upright and single-hearted, but such as is inseparable from that freedom of action which is the distinctive excellence of every moral agent, and perfectly consistent, at the same time, not with the justice merely, but also with the faithfulness and love of the Father who is in heaven. To satisfy the exigencies of such an extraordinary conjuncture, surely there was need for the securities of a very precise and very singular covenant.

4. Now, in the fourth place, for the establishment of just such a covenant, there was found, on the one hand, a peculiar fitness in Adam to be its covenant head; and there appeared, on the other hand, a peculiar advantage, with a view to the safety of the whole race, in their being by him represented.

As regards the fitness of Adam, *first*, it lies in his relation to all mankind, as they were, without exception, derived from his person. Among angels, we are told, there is no such union as marriage,—no such relation, consequently, as paternity. On what principle, therefore, God has conferred any manner of precedence on any of them, above the others, we know not, unless it be that of advancing to authority the individuals upon whom, in their creation, he had already bestowed the higher degrees of wisdom, strength, and holiness. The application of that principle itself is not necessarily excluded in the case of Adam. It is probable, at least, that the primary exemplar, and grand Patriarch of all humanity, whom God formed, the first of his kind, after His own image, and constituted, by his very position, the chief instructor and governor of an innumerable posterity, would not be found inferior to any of them in the compass and vigour of his intellectual and moral powers. This point, it is true, the Scriptures do not determine; but, on that of his universal fatherhood, their testimony is unequivocal. Eve herself, by an act of the Creator's power, was extracted from his side, and formed of his flesh, and of his bones; and from them both, without all question, every individual of the race, in all its tribes, of all complexions and languages, in every generation, and in every land, is descended. In other races, the advancement of any one of its members to any kind of headship might be optional,—in Adam, from the beginning, headship of every kind was altogether natural,—no plant, no scion of humanity, but was afterwards to derive its very existence from him. For the present he was himself Mankind. In short, as if ever a

preserving covenant between God and His creatures was needed, it was needed here :—so, if ever its establishment with one on behalf of many, with a head *for* the members, was just and seemly, and expedient, it was seemly, just, and expedient here. So obvious, indeed, are the reasons for this arrangement, that, to make it otherwise, would have struck us at once as simply an act of arbitrary will.

The advantages, again, in point of security, to be derived from placing in Adam's hands the destinies of his children, judging, as we are bound to do, from the reasonable likelihoods of the case, were altogether immense. The danger not only from man's own fallibility, but from diabolical enmity that beset his condition, must be taken into account, whether we suppose the covenant struck at once with Adam, or one by one with his posterity in detail. It is beyond our compass to inquire, how that danger first originated, or why it was permitted to continue. The fact is certain that Satan had from the beginning, and will have, with some exception, to the end, the power of infesting our world, and tempting our race to sin, that they may perish. The ends of heavenly wisdom, and the rules of sovereign righteousness, in virtue of which this terrible visitation has had place, God, if it is His pleasure, will in due season fully unfold. Meanwhile, we must assume its existence to understand the peculiar use and tendency of the Adamic compact in its institution. It limited, first, the *test* of obedience—I do not say the law, but the *test* of obedience—from innumerable moralities of nature to a singular statutory prohibition. It granted, next, to man such large enjoyment and mastership of the world's riches, as to render the point of self denial, which was to be the pledge of his allegiance and safeguard of his felicity, the lightest and easiest that could be imagined. It furnished Adam, moreover, in addition to the information of his natural sagacity, with specific means of detecting the malice of his enemy—of discovering the fearful nature of the peril to

which he was exposed—of estimating the unbounded value of the privileges which he possessed, and of the love which bestowed them—and of thus arming himself, ere long, through frequent resistance to evil, with the whole panoply of a tried and practised rectitude. But of these things more hereafter. They are now mentioned only to prepare for the question—Was it better that Adam,—vested at once with the full faculties and graces of manhood—fresh from the hand, and joying in the daily fellowship, of his Creator—standing alone the heir of earth and heaven—and occupied with nothing but the care and duty of holding fast his state,—was it better that he, fenced by the provisions of his covenant, and aware that the destinies of his progeny were bound up with his own, should go forth a single champion, but able to scatter with ease the whole host of his adversaries, and should in a limited time for once decide the contest? Or was it better that mankind at large (as since the fall, alas! has been the case) should stand open to assault—that on every point where temptation to sin was possible, it should be tried—that every son and daughter of Adam, through the years of childhood and youth, should each have to renew the combat for the single life of each? Was it better that they should have to prosecute their main concern amid crowds of people now arisen, and amid the distractions of varied employments, surrounded, perhaps, with the evil examples of many fallen, and plied with diabolic seductions through the persons of their human kindred? Was this better? And better that it should be prolonged not during some moderate period of trial, but evermore from the parents to the children (for that would be necessary), and age after age while the world should stand? Ah! who can hesitate in answering the question? By the latter method, it is obvious that the greater number would be lost. By the former, as far as means and advantages could go, there was ample provision made that all should be saved. •



## LECTURE XXX.

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### THE LAW.

#### ADAMIC COVENANT.

It is a fact which we are assured of by express revelation, that prior to the creation of man, an order of spirits far higher than he, had yielded to the seductions and tasted the bitter fruits of sin. The angels, whose glorious attributes placed them apparently nearest to Godhead, gave proof, by the defection of a part of their number—without any temptation, so far as we read, except from their own devices—how impossible it is for any creature that for a moment forgets its dependence upon God, to stand in its own strength. Besides the demonstration of this humbling truth, however, there were other effects to flow from their apostasy. It speedily wrought the utter perversion of all their own powers, the utter ruin of their proper happiness, and finally their reduction, through despair, to a state of permanent hostility, of desperate rage and hatred against God, and against His whole creation, for His sake. In this condition of their hearts, had their actions been restrained, the manifestation of what sin is, and what it can do, would have remained incomplete. The strictness of Divine justice in exacting its penalty, and the resources of heavenly grace in delivering from its power, would not have found their highest scope. For these reasons in part, and for many others doubtless of which we know nothing, the evil angels, with their chief, were suffered, for a certain time, and within a certain sphere, to wreak their malice upon

their fellow creatures. *One* object of their enmity we too certainly know. The home of man's residence, the date of his origin and of His probation, placed HIM within reach of their cruelty. Hence, as was before observed, his condition called for much more than the ordinary aids which every being of limited intelligence perhaps requires, to prevent his diverging from the harmony of a universe too wide for his comprehension. To man such additional defences were necessary as could meet the additional dangers of a singular and most formidable invasion. Far beyond the wisdom, the rectitude, and the strength of his own moral nature, excellent as they were, he not only needed the securities of a positive covenant with God—its precise command—its explicit promise—and its sacramental pledges—but he needed all these, of a very peculiar and extraordinary kind—of the most advantageous and favourable description possible—to make the fortress of his uprightness at all tenable against the principalities and powers of spiritual wickedness, leagued together for his destruction.

To determine, in such a case, what amount of protection was *absolutely* possible or impossible, lies evidently beyond the range of our understandings. But, if so far as we have discernment to see, the best practicable means of safety were provided, surely it is not more reverential than it is rational, to believe that they were in truth the very best.

To follow up this reflection, then, let us ask, first of all, was it possible, as far as our judgment goes, that in consulting for the stability of man's well-being, God should renounce His own royal prerogative, and, because when there is no law, there is no transgression, should abstain from issuing ANY command? To the disordered vision of a fallen creature, some such weak imagination as this may seem not unsupposable. But is not God unchangeably a King? Are not sovereign power, wisdom, and righteousness; essentially His? Shall He deny Himself in the disposal

of His creation, and practically say that He is not what He is, lest Adam sin. Shall He abandon the government of one of His worlds, that man, a worm, or Satan, an enemy, may occupy the vacant throne, and may neglect, or overrule, or reverse, the purposes for which He made, and for which He upholds it. This were too monstrous, yet this were not all. For, we must consider, it is not with the power of God, and of His creatures, as it may be with that of two neighbouring earthly dynasties, either of which may reign absolutely, without encroachment upon the other. On the contrary, the presence of God, and the exertion of His attributes, are so essential to the existence and activity of every living thing, that for moral beings to move at all, in their moral capacity, is of necessity either to use or to abuse His bounty,—is to act for Him or against Him,—is to obey Him as Lord, or, in the prophet's expressive words, to “make Him serve with their sins.” In short, unless He were sovereign He must be subject. And the latter, surely, as matter of compact with Adam for his security, was impossible. Indeed, if it be true, as it is undoubtedly, that the law of God was written in the very frame and constitution of man's nature, when he was made; to abolish that law, and so leave him without any, what else would this be but just to unmake him? Formed as he was, his honour, health, and safety, and joy, consisted in keeping the Divine commandment; and, therefore, to take that away, where the object was to secure his dignity and happiness, were contradictory, and, for that reason, impracticable.

A second imagination, not unnatural for creatures to form who have abused their liberty, is, that it might have been better had that liberty never been given, or had it at least been so restricted that, while left free to do right, they could not commit sin. But this also, however well fitted to answer the tempter's purpose in suggesting hard thoughts of God, is nothing better than a mere absurdity, a metaphysical hallucination.

Just like the former, it could not be reduced to practice, if man were to continue man. The liberty of every sentient being lies in being left at large to follow its inclinations: the liberty of every moral agent, as such, implies his having power to choose the right or to choose the wrong. In spite of all the obscurities that overhang the doctrine of free will, there is a sense, as all feel and admit, in which this is true; and it is that sense with which we are now concerned. Take away his power to choose the wrong, and his choosing the right is no longer an act of liberty, in the full meaning of that term. He is shut up to it. He must so act, if he act at all. Along with this cessation of his liberty, his distinctive character, as a moral agent, ceases. He is no longer capable of an optional allegiance, or a voluntary service. To deal thus with Adam would have been to convert him into a being of altogether a different class from what he was. It would have been to obliterate human morality from his nature, to extirpate human conscience and discretion from his soul, or to render them useless. It would have been to deface in him the brightest feature of the Divine image—to disqualify him for his station as prince of this fair world, loyally subject to the blessed and only Potentate—to make him no longer the disciple of wisdom, but the creature of impulses—and to leave him merely the most refined and intelligent species among brute animals. To the power of God this was no doubt possible, but not without destroying his human creation, in order to form another not human.

If the world then was to stand as God had made it, two things were unavoidably retained as necessary foundations in framing the Adamic Covenant, namely, the prerogative of God as supreme Lawgiver, and the liberty of man as a moral agent. The excellence of the arrangement must be tested by its intrinsic fitness to preserve the integrity of Adam in the presence of his enemy, upon supposition of these two things. The *result*

of the compact which arose afterwards from its working or administration, does not properly pertain to this question; in as much as the omnipotence of God, if it had seemed good in His sight, *could*, it is evident, have upheld man, not only under this covenant, but without any covenant whatever: while, on the other side, man, from his natural fallibility as a creature, left at some critical moment to himself, *might* have fallen not only under this covenant, supposing it imperfect, but under the most perfect and most faultless that could possibly be conceived. The sure stay of created uprightness is neither in itself nor in outward circumstances, however favourable, but in the immutable rectitude only. These necessary statements premised, let us now attend to the actual provisions of the covenant as they stood, with a special view to the discovery of their protective character, and considered after the order already suggested:—

I. The command.

II. The sanctions.

III. The sacramental emblems.

All three together are comprehended in the following words of Moses, which you find in the 8, 9, 15, 16, 17 verses of the 2d chapter of Genesis,—“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. . . . And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden. . . . And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Now, in the first place—

I. As to the commandment—The words immediately preceding it, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat,”

are evidently nothing more than an introduction, intended to make the precept itself more distinct and impressive. All the other riches of the earth are expressly granted him in order to render the single exception palpable and striking. Standing with his God before the particular tree (for so no doubt he did), he looks around, and all that he beholds is gifted for his use; he looks here, and the mandate of Omnipotence forbids him to touch. Of this and this only he must not eat. The prohibition is fixed without limitation, without alternative. It is the law of his being until God recall it. To eat of every other product of paradise, and therefore of the world, is blameless enjoyment—to eat of this is sin.

In the nature of this command was there anything peculiarly fitted to protect the innocence of man from the artifices of the destroyer? To obtain some answer to the question, we must consider, first—

1. This command was of a purely positive kind. The matter of its requirement, so far as man could see, had manifestly no element in itself of either sin or holiness. Prior to the Sovereign interdict, the fruit of that particular tree might have been eaten with just as little imputation of sin, or refrained from with as little pretence to virtue, as that of any other tree in the garden. The use and the abstinence were alike matters of perfect indifference. Whence, then, did the distinction arise? Simply from the Divine prohibition. God had said, "Thou shalt not eat;" and this was all. Unequivocally, solemnly, in His character of Supreme Lawgiver, He had declared His will. There was nothing whatever visible in the subject itself, to weigh either on the side of His injunction or against it. His pleasure, as such, was here propounded to His creature, as the whole motive to self-denial, the sole obstacle to self-indulgence. Divested of all relative inquiries, all collateral considerations, the naked question came to be decided on by Adam, Is God to be re-



sisted, or is He to be obeyed? That alone which man had now to do with, was God's absolute, "*I will*;" so that to obey it now was to acknowledge that it must ever be obeyed; to oppose it now, was to assert that it might always be opposed. Considering, therefore, that our first parent was in his origin wise and upright—that he bore his Maker's own likeness—that he was himself a destined sovereign—that he was filled with the admiration and love of God's glory—and rich beyond all reckoning in the gifts of his Father's bounty—what advantage to steadfastness *could* be greater, or what armour against temptation could be more impenetrable than his being thus, when tempted, evermore shut up by the condition of the covenant, to determine the simple, clear, unencumbered question, "Shall I honour the Almighty Lord, or shall I despise him? Shall I choose God for my unchanging friend, or my eternal foe?"

2. In this command, secondly, was laid down, though not the sole, yet the supreme condition of the covenant—supreme in such sense that on it the fulfilment of other conditions was made to depend. On the conduct pursued regarding it alone, the good or evil to follow was suspended. To keep it, was to live; to break it, was to die. On the day that should see it transgressed, but not sooner, and not later, blessedness was to end, and misery was to begin. Was it then to supersede all other laws? By no means. The law of nature enjoining love to God and man was not abrogated by it, but drawn to a point, and all its duties brought to meet in a common centre. The great maxims of heavenly jurisprudence—"He that doeth them shall live by them"—"But the soul that sinneth it shall die"—nay, "he that shall keep the whole law and yet sin in one point is guilty of all,"—remained untouched by this precept of the covenant. Still it stood the sole *test* of obedience. If once it were violated the most faultless conformity in other respects would be of no avail. So long as it was revered, the danger of offence in other

things would be provided against. In this point of view, if there were no other, surely it presented a high vantage-ground. Without it, man was open to invasion from all sides. On every point and particular where it was possible to do right, it was also possible to do wrong. In all its length and breadth, the field on which holiness might be practised is the same on which sin also might be committed. Through every faculty and feeling of mind or body—in every relation of life, every occupation, every enjoyment, every duty, at all times, in every place, moral pollution might be incurred, and therefore temptation also would not fail to be plied. But a sin that could be acted only in a certain spot, and only at the time when that spot could be visited—a single sin of so peculiar a kind that abstinence from it would, under the providence and grace of God, and by his express promise, shut out all others; to constitute such a sin, both in *his* eye and in the eye of his enemy, the only fatal danger to be shunned, and shunned by a being essentially gracious, holy, and happy, to concentrate his vigilance here, and here arm his whole powers of resistance, not only in his own behalf, but also as the defence of myriads who were to spring from him, was surely to deprive the adversary of no small advantage, and strengthen in no ordinary degree the means of general safety.

3. Thirdly, The nature of the covenant, as resting upon a positive precept, was of singular use in limiting not only the *opportunities*, but also the means and methods of the seducer. These, when his malice is let loose to persecute the fallen, are of two kinds—deceit and violence. But while man stood yet faultless before God, the latter—violence—was out of the question; the former only, deceit, guile, subtilty, was suffered to be employed by him. There are, however, two main avenues in our nature, as originally formed, by which this one instrument of perversion and death might find entrance to our vitals. The one lies through our understanding and conscience, the other

through our sentiments and appetites. The provisions of the covenant were fitted as much as possible to protect and narrow them both.

(a.) On the side of moral intelligence—to begin with that—the commandment, as being not natural, but positive, not moral, but institutional, was capable of the most perfect clearness. The duties of the moral code, however absolute and unquestionable, are to be learned in a great degree by reflection and inference. They are liable to be modified by times, persons, conjunctures. In actual practice, their urgency or spontaneity, their obligation or suspension at any given moment, must be determined by circumstances. They admit of mutual comparison on the point of lesser or greater. They may come into competition, so that one shall supersede another. Hence, there is room for a great deal of nice and delicate casuistry with respect to them, and that arising, as the term casuistry implies, not necessarily from corruption in the understanding, but merely from the intricacy and dubiety of the cases submitted to its decision. No doubt, much of the perplexity which men now experience, proceeds from the strange admixture of good and evil that characterises our existing condition; but still, in the very nature of things, there are spaces of debateable land between right and right, between duty and duty, on which, even in a state of innocence, doubtful questions might be started. Here, consequently, a spacious field was spread, in which angelic knowledge and subtilty, exerting all its force against the far inferior intellect of man, might mislead his judgment, pervert his conscience through his understanding, and lead him blindfold into courses directly contrary in the issue to the true dictates of his nature as God had fashioned it—courses, that is, essentially sinful, and therefore pernicious. But the positive statute of the covenant of works quite precluded all this craft.—“Of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof

thou shalt surely die." What place was there here for confounding sin and duty? What possibility of leading Adam to break the command under the notion of keeping it? Could Satan raise a doubt as to which was the tree of knowledge? Could he persuade Adam that eating was not eating? Or that not to eating, but abstaining, the penalty of death was annexed? That were far too gross to deceive a noble understanding of even the human species. Accordingly, the serpent, in assailing Eve, deceived her, not as to the substance of the deed, but as to the certainty of the penalty. He did not mislead her conscience to imagine that eating was not the forbidden act, but he debauched her conscience through her feelings, inducing her by the excitement of false and vain expectations, to venture on the consequences of wilful transgression. And that, as was just noted, is the other avenue by which the tempter has access to our affections and feelings.

(b) Had this fatal entrance, then, let us once more inquire, been left unguarded? If we but attend a little farther to the circumstance of the successful temptation itself, it will easily appear that everything right and suitable, and, in that sense, everything possible had been done to keep the portal also safe. By what inducement was the woman prevailed with to violate the commandment? "When she saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat." (Gen. iii. 6.) Such were the seductive qualities of the tree. But what account is given of the other trees of the garden, all whose fruits were freely conceded to her use?" (ii. 9.) "Out of the ground made the Lord to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden." In what, then, did the forbidden tree differ from the others? Was it pleasing to sight and sense? So were they. Was it good for nourishing the body? So were they. Was it

in either of these respects superior to the others? That is not said. They were just alike; both were pleasant, both were good. Nay, there is little reason, if any, for supposing that there might not be in the garden other trees not forbidden, of the self-same species with the tree of knowledge. It might merely be a single remarkable plant of the kind, conspicuously placed, and kept wide apart from every other fruit-bearing tree, except the tree of life. Consistently with this supposition, its distinction and identity might be unmistakeably ascertained to our first parents, as certainly it was; and that would be sufficient for their guidance, while even the slight temptation to appetite or curiosity which might have accrued from its singularity, if it had been singular, would to this extent be prevented. By far the greatest excellency of the tree of knowledge, however, yet remains to be mentioned. It was a tree to be desired to make one wise. In this respect, without question, it had no competitor. Knowledge of good and evil was fruit yielded by it alone. But was it in the appointed use, or by the interdicted violation of it that this fruit might *best* be gathered? The tree of knowledge was its name, while Adam stood, and would therefore have continued its name, appropriately, no doubt, and truly, though he had never fallen. Which of these two things then, in man's original condition, was it the more natural to think?—That its promised instruction should be best obtained by respecting its sacramental character, and preserving it ever as the warning, on God's side, against the fearful danger, and on man's as the test and witness of unshaken allegiance? Or that its enlightening benefits were then to be secured, and then only, when man had profaned its sacredness, and converted it into an engine of wicked rebellion against God, and a source of deadly poison to his own soul? Surely man's own unbiased reason would have held the former judgment; it was the ingenious malignity of hell that suggested the latter. So the only peculi-

arity of the forbidden tree was in truth no temptation at all to eat of it. On the contrary, the prohibition that debarred its fruit was just what kept open the way to all its desirable knowledge. And, if there was happiness in view which man had not yet achieved, the means of securing it consisted not in snatching presumptuously the fruits of the tree of knowledge, but by using warrantably the fruits of the tree of life. Whether, therefore, we look to the fatal influence over human feelings and purposes that lies in the pleasure of sense, or in the desire of bodily health and vigour, or in the love of enlarged wisdom, or in the hope of higher and higher degrees of happiness, the temptation that prevailed with each and every one of them was not lodged in the work or Word of God at all, but in the wicked perversion of both by the evil one. The tree and the command were in themselves wholly protective. In union with surrounding circumstances, they seemed the best securities imaginable. What more, indeed, could have been done by them to prevent transgression, unless the fruit had been made unsightly nauseous, deleterious? And yet that would have done little to prevent the first tasting, and at best, would have rested the safety of man upon the appetites of his inferior nature, and not upon the Godlike qualities of his soul. Would this have been suitable to his dignity? Certainly not. And it is more than doubtful if it would have increased his safety.



## LECTURE XXXI.

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### THE LAW.

#### ADAMIC COVENANT.

THE Covenant of Works, as proclaimed from Mount Sinai, was marked undoubtedly with the characters of severity and fear. From this cause, perhaps, it has become usual with divines to view it as not altogether free from some traces of rigour, even as first instituted in Paradise. The minds of godly men, whose consciences, while yet in their sins, have smarted under the strictness of its precepts and penalties, seem scarcely able so to emerge from the cloud of this painful reminiscence, as to regard it in the clear light of privilege, liberty, safety, which notwithstanding did certainly belong to it. That under its provisions the will of the great Lawgiver was to be exactly obeyed, while any abuse of man's original liberty would entail the loss of all happiness, aggravated by direct punishment, is no doubt quite true. But these conditions, of necessity, and in all their stringency, pertained to the law of nature. They were essential to the existence of Adam as a moral agent, the creature of God. They sprung into being along with himself. The compact which followed did but recognise and adopt them. And as to a being of faultless rectitude, conformity to the Divine will was not only perfect liberty but pure delight, the covenant so far from changing that conformity to the worse in either respect, was manifestly calculated to render the leading course of it as obvious and easy, and the securities of Divine faithfulness

around it as complete as the nature of the case could possibly allow. In part, this seems evident, as already stated, from the fact, that the "command" of the covenant being purely positive kept Adam always in the first place to the simple question, "Shall I obey, or revolt from my Maker?" made it impossible, in the next place, by the simplicity of the testing act, to mistake what it was to keep and what to break the law; and finally, by its extreme facility, and by its neutralizing every temptation addressed to appetite, curiosity, or ulterior hope which man's circumstances could of themselves suggest, left absolutely no resource to the tempter, save in his own lying subtilty, and in the unavoidable fallibility of a created soul.

II. The view of the covenant thus presented by the command, is strongly confirmed, in the second place, by the sanctions which enforced it. Death must seize the man if he eat; life will continue while he refrains. Between these two extremes there is no medium, and each extreme is perfect in its kind. Life, as he knows by experience, is complete felicity. Death, therefore, its opposite, must be absolute ruin. In imparting the covenant, God, whose inspiration gave him understanding, undoubtedly taught him, that this was the alternative; for he must else have been left in ignorance of what it chiefly concerned him to know—a thing incredible, because inconsistent with the loving-kindness of the Lord. But what knowledge can be conceived more powerfully conducive to his constancy in uprightness, than the knowledge, that with his own conduct on either side, stood connected such momentous and enduring consequences as these, founded in nature, and ratified by compact? Our sinful dulness of moral feeling, leads us here again exceedingly to underrate the strength of this security. The joy of perfect fellowship with God, we have never known. Even the miseries of sin we have in this world felt but partially. The strongest motives, whether of spiritual hope or fear, we have so

often and so easily trampled under foot, that we cannot fairly apprehend their sway in the mind of a perfectly righteous and holy man. But our first ancestor, bearing his Creator's image yet unimpaired, clear in judgment, tender of conscience, pure in heart, his spirit full to overflowing with the gifts of Divine love, but not insensible to the awfulness of sovereign justice and power; his whole nature bent on righteousness, averse from sin, himself standing the federal head of a countless progeny, with an eternity in view for himself and for them,—doubtless felt it impossible,—when first the terms of the covenant opened full upon his thoughts,—impossible that, for an apple, a berry, he should forsake that complete and experienced blessedness, for untried but intolerable woe.

The more we enter into the particulars of what Adam possessed, and might lose, the better shall we appreciate the protective power lodged in the sanctions of the covenant.

1. Life, in the first place, was the boon, the endowment which he possessed. Strictly speaking, this did not consist at all in mere being, but in well-being. To live, in Scripture phraseology, is to have all the good of which nature is capable, superadded to the framework of nature. Existence is necessary as the support, or the vehicle, on which life is to be superinduced, but it may equally become the substratum of death. In Adam, agreeably to the admirable powers and faculties of his being, the well-being was absolute. *Perpetuity*, indeed, it did not possess. But that enters not into *the essence* of any good thing that is made. In man or angel it is but the perpetual exercise of GOD's *free goodness*. As in a *creature*, then, the blessedness of Adam was full and entire. To all his powers of soul and body, according to their several natures, were added health and vigour, ease, activity, and enjoyment. The world, with all its riches, was his kingdom: its loveliest spot, cultured by Divine skill, was his palace; a full and visible superi-

ority to everything earthly was his crown. The Lord that made him was both by nature and by express promise, his instructor, his sure confidence, and his exceeding joy. He had certain expectation of an innumerable offspring to fill the whole earth, who, safe in his federal uprightness, should do him filial reverence in all their generations,—should dwell in righteousness and mutual love, as dear brethren,—should reap the world's fruitfulness as a wealthy patrimony,—should rejoice together with him continually in giving thanks, and glory, and praise to their own and their father's God—being filled with the wonders of His greatness and satisfied with the gladness of His fellowship.

Were there nothing else before Adam than an eternity of such happiness, what a portion was this to cast away ! or with open eyes to put even in hazard !—And yet it is generally held, not without strong reason, that the prospect of ulterior good, of advancement, namely, to a state of immutable righteousness and heavenly glory, was held forth to him as the final reward of stedfastness in the covenant.

The main arguments in support of this belief may be reduced to three.

(a) Man was, at the beginning, formed with a capacity of nature for this high exaltation. It consists with all the attributes of God, and is in harmony with the marvellous wisdom and grace of His counsels, in the end to bring His earthly offspring near to His throne, where it is established on high, and where His glory shines forth in its fullest brightness. The place is meet for the reception of humanity made perfect;—and it is decreed that he who enters there shall never fall. Of these statements none can be called in question; because the truths which they assert will all be realized in the people of Christ, as they are already exemplified, transcendently, in Christ's own person. True, it is only in virtue of His redeeming work that *sinners* can be so promoted. But there is no reason for suppos-

ing, if Adam had never sinned, that his constancy in obedience would have prevented him from ever arriving at what the event shows to have been from the first contemplated, as the true consummation of his native perfection and happiness. Much more probable it is, that the covenant which did not neglect so many minor advantages, would far rather provide for the greatest.

(*b*) The first commandment of the moral law is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." There is no limit here fixed to the exercise of love, but the measure of our intellectual, moral, and practical powers. As these enlarge, which it is their nature to do, the precept requires that love should enlarge along with them. But God also is love. He requires us to love Him because He first loved us; so teaching us that the true requital of love is love in return. Shall He, then, Himself not act upon this principle? And, as the love of His creature increases in ardour of devotedness and of desire, shall He, on His side, withhold the fuller expressions of His acceptance and favour? Of course, the dependent being, who is debtor to God for all he possesses, and especially for the privilege of loving Him, can lay no claim to such recompense as matter of right. But the question here is not, what justice must concede, but what goodness will indulge: and certainly it accords well with His character who said, "To him that hath it shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly"—"Ask what ye will, believing, and it shall be done unto you"—to let all the fountains of His loving-kindness flow forth upon that soul that thirsteth for Him as in a dry and sultry land, and panteth after Him as the hart panteth after the water-brooks. But this reciprocation, on the one hand and on the other, tends evidently to enlargement; and in the case of Adam, had it never been interrupted, at what must it in the end have arrived? Clearly at man's admission

into the heavenly presence of his Maker, since that was the goal of his nature, short of which it could not rest. Then, did the covenant take any cognisance of this result? It seems unavoidable that it should. For by constituting abstinence from the forbidden fruit, the test and the expression of all loyalty and all obedience, it rendered that abstinence the highest and noblest exercise of love; and unless, at the same time, it made mention likewise of the heavenly glory, then, in adopting and embodying the chief duty of the law of nature, it wholly omitted its chief recompense. How much more reasonable to judge that in requiring the duty it also secured the reward.

(c) A third argument is drawn directly from the Scriptures, and indeed appears conclusive. In the doctrinal portion of his Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, Paul reasons largely to show that the blessings of justification, and its inseparable concomitant, the inheritance of eternal life in glory, can never be attained by the works of the law, but only by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And for what reason, according to the Apostle, can they not be attained by the works of the law? Because all men have sinned; because by the law is the knowledge of sin; because, consequently, as many as are of the law are under the curse. All this, however, only shows that if to the ends of justification and glory the law is weak, it is weak through the flesh. It does not show that as originally given to sinless Adam it could not be the instrument both of righteousness and heavenly bliss. Accordingly, the Apostle teaches, in positive terms, that the law, though now become death to him, had been ordained unto life. He quotes its own language,—“The man that doeth them the same shall live by them.” And of what life is he speaking while he thus declares the original design of the law? Just the very life which *now*, he tells us, is no otherwise to be reached than by faith only in the Lord Jesus Christ. The conclusion therefore seems legitimate and firm, that by the law of works, especially



and pre-eminently as it was incorporated with the Adamic covenant, the blessedness of a life celestial and everlasting, was secured as the reward of true obedience. To establish and ratify the inference, what stronger consolation could be desired than the history of the second Adam? For the righteousness and salvation which, living and dying, he wrought out for Himself and for His people, was in no other way achieved than by a divine-human fulfilment of this very law in the whole extent of its requirements, positive as well as moral,—such fulfilment as in every respect magnified it above measure and made it honourable. What therefore, in the hands of Christ, it actually effected, in the hands of our first covenant head, had he proved faithful, it was capable of effecting. By means of it, on behalf of himself and of his race, if he did but abstain from the forbidden tree he had all the blessings of this earthly world in actual possession, and all the glories of the heavenly world in certain prospect. *WILL he taste* the fatal fruit? If it were not done in fact, we should have judged it impossible for him to do it; more especially since he knew that forfeiting once this godlike inheritance, his earthly days, if not immediately cut off, must be passed amid the toils and sorrows of a desolate wilderness, and his eternity be spent in the gulf of fiery darkness.

2. The reverse side of the picture, however, which this last remark presents, it is not necessary to dwell upon. He that knew by experience what life was, had abundant means of apprehending by a very clear intuition what death must be. To retain existence but lose all its enjoyments—to have disorder and decay wasting his body—confusion, disturbance, and grief beclouding the faculties of his soul—to see his glorious world dismantled—to find his means of subsistence stinted and embittered—to know himself and his offspring doomed, through his fault, to the dust of corruption—surely these were conceptions which, with intelligence like his, and, above all, with God for his instructor,

and concerned to make him understand, could well find entrance into his soul, though yet upright, not only with sufficient clearness but with awful impression. In striving to imagine what Adam was in his state of innocency, let us not divest him of infirmities essential to humanity. Were there no herbs in paradise that could teach his sense of taste the difference between sweet and nauseous? Was there no sensitive nerve in his body that could give him the idea of physical pain? Separated for a season, as surely he might be, from the society of his only companion, could he learn nothing of the privation to be sustained in the loss of affectionate human converse? Wrapt in the vision of God's presence and love, could no such reflection as this be possible for his soul to make,—“Were I cut off,—for ever cut off, from the light of this countenance, how dark and desolate were I!” When the prohibition was uttered,—“In the day that thou eatest, dying thou shalt die,” could no expression be thrown into the aspect and voice of Him who is terrible in righteousness, that should make the holy heart of his creature tremble, and tremble the more because it was holy? that should make him inwardly think thereafter, “If the warnings of his love be so overpowering, what must be the revelations of his wrath?” It is merely the helplessness of our conceptive faculties in an element untried, together with our tendency to be ever gathering from Scripture what in truth is not there, that makes us so generally deem it impossible for Adam before the fall to have framed any just or effective notion of the death which must follow his rebellion as its punishment. But have the celestial angels, shall we think, no true or affecting apprehension at all of the horrors endured by their apostate compeers in hell? Higher still, can the perfectly and only blessed Lord God be less than infinitely cognizant, both in their nature and in their measure of those terrible severities which His justice everywhere inflicts upon the sons of wickedness, although He Himself has not only

never known suffering, but is incapable of knowing it? We are sure that He perfectly apprehends the penal effects of His own anger, without the possibility of feeling aught that resembles them; and can it therefore either be in speculation contradictory, or impossible in fact, that He should cause His own intellectual and moral image in man, very clearly and feelingly to apprehend the dreadful nature of death, without at all inflicting it upon him? Unless we can suppose the all-important contract formed, in terms which, to the party in danger, and on the side where his danger lay, were terms without meaning, we *must* believe that the man was made to understand, in very deed, what the penal sanction of His covenant implied. To a similar understanding, on the side of life, was added the home knowledge of experience—no doubt a mighty advantage—which instructed him not in the pleasantness of his earthly lot alone, but in the far greater fullness, besides, of his heavenly portion. For what lesson did the prohibition of such a single tree convey, if not that his unlimited felicity was yet future? And what was Paradise to him, but as Canaan was to Abraham, the emblem and prefiguration of a better country? And what were the interviews with Godhead vouchsafed him there, the happiest, without question, that could be sustained by unglorified humanity, but certain pledges, because they were real though faint anticipations of the beatific vision? Looking upwards, then, from the scene of his first creation, he saw clearly, and within reach, the brightness of heavenly day. Looking downward, he beheld afar off—but he beheld—the blackness of eternal darkness, with just the possibility that, through transgression, it might engulf him. But *would* he, in such circumstances, *would* he transgress? For a trifling and profitless indulgence in eating a fruit, not better naturally than other fruits, and in its sacramental quality made beneficial only by remaining untasted, *would* he, at once and for ever, willingly forfeit all happiness, and incur all torment?

Surely, if left to the native influences of his position, it could not be, or it hardly could. Nay, though angelic enmity lay watching for his destruction—if, as is likely, he were forewarned—where should the keenest edge of subtilty find entrance here to sever the bonds of his union with God? So, beforehand, we should ask perhaps in vain. But the sad event has solved the problem. A weaker spirit than Adam's own was caught unguarded, and was deceived. Other influences were now brought to bear upon his mind and heart than Satan previously had power to wield. There is a direct influence of infernal angels, since but too well known, largely felt, among men; not exerted in the way merely of presenting illusions to the judgment, or stimulants to the sense; but, if we may use a strong yet intelligible metaphor, by immediate contact, by pressing impulse, which it is possible may not have been wanting, in the first moment of Adam's alarm, on discovery of the woman's rashness, to entangle more the perplexity of his judgment, and increase the agitation and trouble of his heart. But let us hold nothing as matter of certainty that is not evinced by clear reason, or as matter of faith, that is not manifestly taught by the Word of God. We know it was embraced in the eternal decree that man should fall. We know that nothing could infallibly preclude that catastrophe, save only that free intervention of God which was in fact withheld. What reasons of His own transcendent wisdom and righteousness dictated this course to the holy and gracious Jehovah, it is in small measure, indeed, that He has disclosed, or that we can descry. But in order to give our hearts rest in the belief that they were reasons perfectly adequate—nay, morally inevitable—if God were to create and govern a universe like ours,—in order to this, something at least is gained—if within the field that is open to our inspection and scrutiny, it can be discovered and satisfactorily shown that, short of such direct interposition of the Divine power, nothing

imaginable had been left unprovided or undone, that could naturally operate to prevent integrity from erring, and innocence from being made a prey. If the command of the primeval covenant had, as I trust is manifest, this tendency, and if its sanctions wrought powerfully in the same direction, not less effective, as to their intrinsic nature and uses, were its sacramental symbols. But on this large branch of the subject, it were unseasonable at present to enter.

## LECTURE XXXII.

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### THE LAW POSITIVE.

#### ITS SACRAMENTAL ORDINANCES.

IN considering the nature of the Adamic covenant we have endeavoured to learn how far, consistently, of course, with the Divine sovereignty and man's liberty as a moral agent, it was of a protective and preservative character. The precept of it, we found, while it recognized and established the moral law, was purely positive, as to its institution, and extremely easy in its requirement: the sanctions, whether on the side of reward or punishment, were of the most solemn and momentous import; clearly revealed, moreover; and addressed to a soul profoundly sensitive to their impression. The covenant, therefore, tended manifestly to the confirmation of man in righteousness as regards its legal provisions. Let us inquire if the same tendency be discoverable in its sacramental ordinances.

Among these have sometimes been reckoned such privileges as the Sabbatical rest, and the delightful seat of the garden of Eden; and, indeed, no doubt is left by the inspired comments of the New Testament, that the one was a type and foretaste of the heavenly Sabbath, (Heb. iv. 3,) the other of the heavenly Paradise. (Rev. ii. 7.) To us it may seem, however, that they rather served to secure fitting time and place for the general exercise of Divine worship than to be themselves the instruments or symbols of any particular rite or service. This last, however, is, in our days, the characteristic of sacramental ele-



ments. They are select emblems, each expressly appropriated by the Scripture to some one definite and specific act of worship. Now, two such appear undoubtedly to have been appended to the Adamic covenant, namely, the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

In the forms of religion whereby God, from the creation downwards, has received his human family into communion with Himself, there is visibly throughout a wonderful harmony both of purpose and arrangement. But the earliest particulars of these forms described in the more ancient Scriptures, while very striking, and full of meaning, are few, detached, and as they stand in the record, generally unexplained. The reason probably is, that,—so far as the comfort of godly men in the Old Testament age required—the spirit of prophecy, then extensively given, interpreted to living instructors the rapid hints and notices of sacred writ, whilst, agreeably to the nature of all preparatory dispensations, much was left, after all, to be filled up and illustrated, as well as much to be changed by subsequent events and revelations. On the contrary, when the age of fulfilment and perfection had arrived, all the great historical facts, and all the spiritual ordinances of religion, were minutely related, and explicitly defined in the New Testament Scriptures. For now the gifts of inspiration were about to cease; and it, therefore, became indispensable that all necessary disclosures, hitherto reserved, should at once be made, as well those which might sufficiently expound what was dark in the annals of the olden time, as those which, along with the teaching of Moses and the prophets, might shed the full light of Gospel truth and righteousness on every future age. Thus the Canon was completed *AS delivered to the Church*. But, *as present to the mind of the revealing Spirit*, it was always complete—from Horeb to Patmos—from Moses to the beloved disciple it was invariably the same. The mutual relations of all its parts, the endless multiplicity of

its self-interpreting adjustments were continually before Him. Would we, therefore, comprehend the mind of the Spirit in any one portion of His Word, it is evident that we must read it onward from the beginning to the end, and backward from the end to the beginning—that we must compare it book with book, and paragraph with paragraph, and clause with clause. To what purpose are these remarks? To show that if we would truly apprehend the nature of the Adamic sacraments, we must begin with the similar ordinances of the Gospel age, when sacraments were perfect, not only in their institution, for so they were at all times, but also in their developments, as more explicitly implying acts of worship, and in the knowledge scripturally given of their spirit and import. From thence, if we trace them upward through the preceding dispensations, it may, perhaps, appear, with no inconsiderable evidence, that the trees of knowledge and of life were real sacraments—the baptism and the eucharist, indeed, of the primeval covenant.

To prosecute the inquiry with any degree of clearness and satisfaction, it is necessary at the outset to recollect distinctly, though very summarily, the several particulars which enter into the nature of a sacrament. They are enumerated, happily, in a compendium of Christian doctrine, engraven on the memory of most of us from our infancy. According to its brief but full definition, a sacrament is an ordinance of religion expressly limited and described; it is instituted by Divine authority; it fixes upon certain signs cognisable by the senses and specifically prescribed, which must be employed, and alone employed, in its ministration; by these, certain Divine persons and privileges are exclusively designated; they again—that is, the persons and privileges—are uniformly such as are involved in the arrangements of some covenant between God and man; and by means of the ordinance, when worthily received, they are, according to

their several natures, represented, sealed, and applied to the believing worshipper.

It concerns our present purpose specially to notice the relation which a sacrament bears to the covenant on which it rests, or, if you will, of which it forms a portion. The parties, the conditions, the provisions of that covenant, it must always be presupposed, are already ascertained, are declared, and ratified by the Word of God Himself. The whole nature, and procedure, and result of that connexion into which it brings the creature with the Creator, are determined and made sure by the promise of God, and acquiesced in by the assent of man. Then the sacrament is appended as a bodily presentment of the spiritual things which the covenant embraces and intends. The sacrament shapes forth in symbols, just what the covenant pronounces in words. The sacrament embodies, in a permanent religious observance, what the covenant in the hour of revelation uttered once for all. And, in short, the sacrament is so contrived, that whensoever it is rightly administered, the parties to the covenant meet, and, in the act of celebration, impart or present what blessings soever on the one side, or services on the other, the ordinance was appointed to typify.

From the nature, then, of this relation between covenant and sacrament, it will easily appear upon a little reflection that, assuming sacrament to be a constant appendage to every covenant, less than two such ordinances for each could scarcely be sufficient; more than two would not be absolutely necessary. The reason is, that to the ends of every such gracious compact of God with his creature, two things and only two are indispensable—one that the covenant be entered into, the other that the covenant be fulfilled. The former of these, from its nature, requires to be performed but once; the latter is a thing of continual exercise and everlasting obligation. Accordingly, under

the New Testament,—baptism, which signifies and seals our first engrafting into Christ, our consequently obtaining an interest in the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our having once and for ever engaged ourselves to be the Lord's;—Baptism is but once administered to each individual; whereas the Lord's supper, in which believers address their faith and love to the memory of the Lord's death, to the certainty of the Lord's ascension, and to the hope of his second advent, vowing perpetual service; and in which, on the other hand, "they are by faith made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace:"—This sacrament, as its nature dictates, is frequently partaken of by individual christians, and will unceasingly be solemnised after that manner in the Church so long as the world shall stand. This foundation laid, if we will but bear distinctly in mind that the washing with water of the *initiatory* sacrament represents the cleansing of conscience and heart by the blood and spirit of Christ, that we may be severed from our sins and united to Him; and that the bread and wine of the *nourishing* sacrament represent the person of Christ and all His fulness, as delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification; that receiving of that fulness, even grace for grace, our souls may grow up to the perfection of holiness, and be established unto everlasting life, then it may not be difficult perhaps to see that two like sacraments of the same or a similar import were appended to every preceding divine covenant that affected mankind generally; so that travelling upwards from age to age along the entire series of God's gracious renewals of promise, we may find at every step the same ordinances as to their substance repeated, until we recognise them at last flourishing even in the bowers of Eden, while man is yet upright.

Immediately prior to the Gospel age was the Law of Moses, the covenant made on Mount Sinai with the natural seed of Abraham. It needs only be mentioned that under it the sacra-

ment of *initiation* continued from the fathers was circumcision once administered, and signifying, like baptism, the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh (Col. ii. 11); and the sacrament of *edification* was the Passover, like the Lord's Supper, representing the efficacy of Christ's flesh and blood to deliver from destruction, and strengthen the receiver for his journey through this wilderness to the heavenly Canaan. Connected with this latter ordinance, indeed, and forming as it were a continuation and enlargement of it, were all the sacrifices of the altar. But what deserves special notice is the fact that with immediate respect to the perilous crisis of the history of Israel, intervening betwixt their departure from Egypt and their entrance into Palestine, there seems to have been a doubling of the sacraments; just as if God's extraordinary care over them during those forty years—a thing involved in the promise—had been a second covenant included in the first. They were all baptized unto Moses, the apostle tells us (1 Cor. x. 2), in the cloud and in the sea—and as regarded the other sacrament, alluding to the manna and to the waters in Horeb, he adds,—“And did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ.”

After this inspired exposition of the Mosaic sacraments, we may look with some confidence for the like emblematic pledges of blessing on the covenant with Noah. When the patriarch had gone forth of the ark, and God had smelled the sweet savour of his sacrifice, “I,” said the Lord, “Behold, I establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood, neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, this is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall

be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth." (Gen. ix. 9.) The sprinkling of the cloud through the rainbow, then, was the baptism of this covenant; the instrument of the world's destruction, surmounted by the bright emblem of mercy, was its element; every one born under this dispensation was, by such birth, at once baptised in it. And what was its import? Not, indeed, the taking away of sin, with a view to everlasting life, but the non-imputation of sin, with a view to the safety of this earthly life from another deluge—"The Lord said, in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite every living thing as I have done." (viii. 21.) And for the better support and supply of this earthly life during its continuance, was there provided under the Noachic covenant, any sacramental food? any recurring passover? any perpetual supper? Will not a just analogy lead us to regard in this light the large and precious grant conveyed in these remarkable words?—"The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth on the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea, into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat unto you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But the flesh, with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof," he immediately subjoins, "ye shall not eat." That was reserved as the type of another life, animating other flesh, and prepared for effusion under a spiritual covenant, to be the everlasting life of men.

Has the covenant of Noah ever been abolished? How little do we reflect, that we live by its sacraments! When the colours of that magnificent bow overarch the repositories of deluge and thunder, should we not remember the baptism that symbolises our merciful entry, under compact and protection,



into this present life, with all its blessings; just as an Israelite, under Moses, or a Christian under the Gospel, coming to years of understanding, will recollect, with reverence, his early initiation into the promise and preparation of the life to come? And when our table is spread with wholesome and rich provision, not ordinarily conceded to our fathers before the flood, ought we not to find a sacredness in every meal derived from that boon of heaven, to be the ground of additional thankfulness, and the motive of a more strenuous obedience?

There were sacraments annexed to the dreary transit of Israel through the desert. Were there similar signs of favour granted to Noah's melancholy year of tossing on the flood? Surely it was by promise he was preserved there. "Behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under heaven; and every thing that is on the earth shall die; but with thee will I establish my covenant, and thou shalt come into the ark; thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee." Very remarkable is the comment of the Apostle Peter upon these words. Referring to the days of Noah and the preparation of the ark, (1 Pet. iii. 20,) "wherein few," says he, "that is, eight souls, were saved by water, the like figure whereunto," he adds, "even baptism doth now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The flood, then, washed Noah and his household pure from the pollutions of the former time to prepare them for a happier future. And was the sacramental emblem of continued life and blessing forgotten? Rather, perhaps, should we find it in the ark itself the means of their life, in name the same with the ark of the covenant, and probably, like it, a figure of Christ, plunged in the waters of judgment, yet passing out of them all in His resurrec-

tion. It was fraught at all events with provision for the sustenance of their bodies, and with all clean animals for sacrifice, as a memorial of salvation to their souls.

There is but one step more to the covenant of mercy with Adam and Eve, immediately after the fall. Was there a baptism then? Was there a sacred feast?

As a clue to the proper answer of these questions, let us consider for a moment the various aspects of sin;—of sin as taken away by the initiatory ordinance under the various covenants mentioned.—Under the Gospel, sin is pollution, to be washed away with water. Under the law, sin was all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, (James i. 21,) to be removed by circumcision. During the promise of the wilderness, sin was Egyptian idolatry and wickedness, to be drowned with Pharoah in the sea. By the post-diluvian covenant, sin was hereditary disease of the soul, to be winked at in this world as incurable by natural means. By the covenant of the ark, sin was the blood, and violence, and ungodliness of Cain and his offspring, to be swallowed up, along with themselves, a world of murderers, by the flood. But in Adam and Eve, after they had sinned, what was it? Nakedness,—nakedness to be clothed. And clothed it was—with skins—the natural vestments of victims slain. Was not Aaron, the high priest, after being purified with blood and with water, robed also with holy garments, ere he entered to burn incense before the mercy-seat? And may not this clothing of our first parents, in the rapid sketches of that earliest of narratives, sufficiently suggest the priestly washing, as well as vestures, (for that blood was shed we know,) or sufficiently represent, at least, the baptismal removal of sin, which very thing was then most aptly expressed by the hiding of shame and the ministering of protection and comfort to shivering wretchedness. As to the nourishing sacrament of that covenant fewer reflections may suffice. The flesh of sacrifice was evidently provided.

Was it partly eaten? or was it all either consumed on the altar or cast away? That it was partly eaten seems by much the more probable supposition. For, under the law of Moses, in which alone the whole observances of sacrifice are formally and minutely detailed, we find that a considerable part of certain offerings was used as food by the people, and even part of the sin-offering by the priest,—which office Adam held; while the subsequent grant of flesh for ordinary aliment to Noah and his posterity, not only does not prove that sacrificial flesh, undoubtedly supplied, was not from the first appointed to be eaten; but itself assumes a higher and even a sacred significance, from the supposition that it was so appointed and used.

At last we reach the earliest covenant of all, the covenant of works, ratified by God with Adam while he was yet in innocency. And here we shall undoubtedly find the same two sacraments, as to their substance, of course adapted to the peculiarities of the time. But we must consider them in the inverse order of the others, because here the progress of events is inverted. It is man, originally blessed with the Divine fellowship, departing *from* God; and not man, now corrupt and outcast, returning to God.

In the beginning, the covenant, like Paradise, was a fenced and richly-planted garden. Its first and brightest sacramental symbol was the tree of life. According to various passages of Scripture, to which reference will be made hereafter, it represented the Filial Godhead, or, if the designation seem preferable, God in Christ, through whom under the covenant of nature, as well as afterwards under that of redemption, the Holy Spirit was given from the Father to his creature. Its leaves and fruits represented all the blessings both of His Providence and grace. It testified that man had received the life which he possessed by God's free gift—that upon God the preservation and advancement of his life wholly depended, and might be from

Him obtained—and that, by firm allegiance and dutiful observance, it would in due season be exalted into a life of glory in heaven. The use of this tree by Adam, like that of every other tree in the garden save one, was at all times permitted; and while it does not appear that physically it possessed any strengthening or refreshing virtue more than others, its sacramental efficacy could be measured only by the extent of His power and faithfulness whose promise it symbolized. If Adam, in time of need, had recourse by faith to the fruits of this tree, doubtless, he should have life, and should have it most abundantly. This was the nourishing sacrament of the primeval covenant.

The other was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Instead of the initial, it may more fitly be called, what man's apostasy made it, the terminal sacrament of the covenant. It is true that, like baptism, circumcision, and the rest, it was, so to speak, the avenue, the gate of the covenanted inclosure. But whereas, in all the other cases, the human party in the compact stood without, and must seek by this gate to find entrance, in this case, on the contrary, that party was already within; and by the law of his nature being free, yet, obliged to the willing service of the Divine Sovereign, trial must be made, the safest of trials, by giving him the power of this gate, whether, keeping it fast closed, he will joyfully abide in his Creator's love; or whether, casting it wide open, he will presumptuously pass forth, and so rebelling against God, bring down destruction upon himself and his posterity. Such a sacrament was the forbidden tree. He abused it just as do those who at the Lord's holy table eat and drink judgment to themselves. But was judgment the proper object and end of either the one ordinance or the other? Quite the contrary! Look a moment at the native language of the ancient symbol. It testified, first, that what God commanded was to be performed, just because God commanded

it. Next, it proclaimed that whosoever sinned against God in any matter, how light soever, was doomed to the death, and must die. Farther, it protested, that whatsoever portion of all the world's possessions, or pleasures, or informations, could not, like its own fruit, be enjoyed without transgression, must absolutely and for ever be renounced. Lastly, it declared that the life of man in this lower world should never be his absolute and consummate perfection or happiness; for that, it bade him turn to the tree of life. Think of Adam, therefore, coming daily before this tree, to worship on the spot where, without question, God had appeared to him, and instituted His covenant—for such places probably were then, as afterwards, accounted holy—coming for certain to the only spot where the forbidden fruit could be plucked for eating; what would be the daily suggestion of his uncovetous eye? and what the constant term of his godly meditation? Would it not be such as this—"I will not rebel against my glorious King, but obey Him. I will choose life always—death never. By no means will I rest in the intermediate, and, therefore, imperfect enjoyments of this earth as my proper life; in God will I seek it, and in His heaven shall be sure to find it. What longing of my own, or what seduction of the enemy, shall tempt me to the madness and wickedness unspeakable of letting go my righteousness? If ever, for a moment, my heart admits so much as the thought of such defection, I will hold it as a token that death is at the door. I will set my eyes on the tree of life, for it is close by that of doom, and snatching its treasure with my right hand, ere my left can reach the mortal poison, I will eat, I will pray; my heart shall be filled with the grace and strength of my God, the Holy, the Omnipotent; I will expel the imaginations of iniquity, I will trample the adversary beneath my feet." Could not all these things have easily been? Is it not astonishing that they were not? But had they taken place our safety had been provided

for. Short experience would have taught Adam his own perilous liability to sin ; and the ever-present all-sufficiency of God had, through the abstinence enjoined, taught him the good of being faithful in the face of inducements to apostasy ; had unveiled to him the evil concentrated in the malignity, and guile, and misery, of the wicked one ; and had preserved him from the sinister and direful knowledge of evil which accrued from his transgression. What interesting inquiries would the subject present—but we cannot overtake them. Enough, however, I trust, has been stated to show, that, as in its command, and in its sanctions, so also in its sacraments, the Adamic Covenant was not a rigorous injunction, or a snare, but, in its true intent, at once a stronghold of defence, and a home of gladness.



## LECTURE XXXIII.

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### THE LAW POSITIVE.

#### PATRIARCHAL AND MOSAIC DISPENSATIONS.

ENOUGH has perhaps been said to indicate the nature and tendency of positive law as given in paradise to our first parents before the fall. Let our attention be now directed to the continuance and development of positive law during the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations. When the covenant of works had come short, through man's apostasy, of its original purpose, "to give life," its moral code being eternal and immutable, was made, in the mercy of God, the foundation of a new and better covenant:—While its positive institutions, in so far as they rested only upon the relations of God to man *as innocent*, were of necessity changed along with the change of those relations, and made way, under the economy of grace, for ordinances having the same general nature of positive law, and the same express reference to covenanted blessings, but differing widely in form, as being significant of truths and duties in many respects *essentially* different.

In attempting to approach this subject from a commanding point of view, it is sufficient at the outset simply to remark, that if the defences of a covenant were necessary to preserve man by possibility in his original righteousness, much more were the provisions of another covenant indispensable when he was to be recovered from a state of guilt; and farther, that of both covenants, that of works and that of grace, the ultimate objects were the same, just as the parties covenanting were the same. The

point which requires our *special* attention is the diversity or rather the contrast and contrariety of the *ground* on which the parties met in the one as compared with the others. In the covenant of works that ground was man's innocence, holiness, and acceptance in the sight of God; in that of grace, it was man's criminality, corruption, and condemnation. According to the difference of these opposite conditions, all the terms and modes of intercourse between the parties differed. Under the first order of things, God graciously drew near in the character of a bountiful and approving Father, manifested, no doubt, through Him who is essentially the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person; but at the same time in the way of direct and immediate fellowship of Father, Son, and Spirit equally with a child in whom God delighted. Adam, on the other side, in the nakedness of his purity and glory, as the masterpiece of God's earthly workmanship, reverently approached to God, his *all* in *all*, full of filial trust, devotedness, and thankfulness. Whether in his individual capacity or as covenant-head of his posterity, his access there was immediate and complete: and such also, with allowance only for the difference of their public and personal relations, would have been the privilege, had the covenant stood, of every soul among his descendants. These views, deducible from the general analogies of Scripture, accord perfectly with all that is recorded—but it is not much—of the primeval blessedness.

Once that the sacred contract was broken, however, all harmony, all felicity, vanished. Immediately God descends in the character of a Sovereign and righteous Judge, first investigating the crime, "What is this that thou hast done?" and then pronouncing sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Man, dragged reluctantly from the hiding place, to which shame and fear had driven him—the *shame* of present baseness, the *fear* of coming punishment—stands at the bar a self-convicted criminal, and sinks helpless and hopeless beneath

his merited doom. Here the first period of his history closes. This is the true and full issue of his probation under the first covenant. A gulf immeasurable is now opened betwixt the creature and the Creator. Above stands the Lord, kindling His indignation against the violator of heavenly rectitude and sovereign majesty, and bound by His truth, His justice, by the honour of His great name, and by the interests of all His rational offspring, to inflict, without mitigation, and without respite, the death which His law had threatened. Beneath lies the man, prostrated by his terror and his confusion, bereft of all desire, along with all power, to repair his fault, not more undone in condition, than perverted in nature, and out of the depth of his misery and his despair, hating his own existence, and hating Him who gave it.

In circumstances like these, if God is ever to visit His fallen creature for good, it can only be in mere grace, in free mercy, in pure loving-kindness, that of its own impulse, will savingly, and despite all obstacles, embrace the children of corruption and of wrath. Such love, moreover, is not to be shown at the expense of His holiness. To rescue the transgressor from his punishment, shall God put off His own perfection? What can equal the impiety of such a thought, unless it be its folly? as if the utter ruin of all creation were not involved in the dishonour of the Creator! No! the righteousness of God can allow of mercy, only if His mercy can work BY righteousness. But what are the demands of His righteousness here? For human offence there must be human atonement, since none but man can suffer the punishment of man, such as it has been fitly denounced. The law prescribed to man has been robbed of its proper fruits of holy living; nothing can repair the failure but man's perfect obedience. By man's revolt and persevering enmity, the rights of God's throne have been set at nought; nothing can redress the wrong, but, along with expiation, the renewed homage of man, proffered from

a willing and pure heart, and followed ever after by the affections and deeds of an untainted allegiance. Can wretched Adam make such high amends? Then were he far greater in his downfall than in his uprightness. Can angels do it? The task, even were it not beyond their strength, is alien to their nature. In the economy of God's house, angel can no more hold the place of man than man of angel. Can God achieve it? He is all-sufficient. Yet, *as God*, He cannot die,—He cannot yield to His own commandments the observance of a creature, or present before His own throne the fealty of a subject. One only way seems open. God can put on humanity. He can assume into His own person the sinner's nature, soul and body, without his sinfulness. He can bring all the riches and all the energies of His own infinite attributes to work out, through human faculties, the precise conditions, and supply the exact compensations, which the case requires, and that with a Divine and glorious redundancy. Hence the incarnation! O who could have presumed to dream of such an expedient? or think such condescension possible, unless AS a dream? But the love of our God is as infinite as His knowledge and His power. To save a chosen people, the Son of God is destined to become the seed of the woman, and is announced, at once, as the Deliverer that, with the bruising of His heel, shall bruise the head of the serpent.

Upon this great fact is built the whole significance, spirit, and glory of positive law, since the fall, under all its forms, and especially in its largest developments during the Patriarchal and Sinaitic dispensations. Let us therefore dwell for a little upon the particulars of the fact, as it furnishes the true explanation of them all. And,—

I. The incarnation being the means by which it pleased God to overpass the gulf that divided Him from man, it is accordingly very God that is become incarnate. Christ is God's "own Son," in a sense which implies His participation of the Father's

full essence and perfections. (John v. 19.) So that, while humbling Himself to be a servant, He counted it not robbery to be equal with God. (Phil. ii. 6.) As by Him God made the worlds, (Heb. i. 2.,) and, consequently, made Adam, so it was by Him that He revealed Himself to Adam in paradise, through the whole of that blessed converse. It is in Him that all things evermore consist. (Col. i. 17.) As to the works of Divine providence, His own language is, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v. 17); and if God is to judge the world in righteousness, none else being judge but He, yet to Christ is all that Divine charge and sovereign function committed, because He is also the Son of man.

II. While *headship* was a provision common to both the covenants, its uses in the first were immeasurably inferior to its office and powers in the second. Adam so far stood in the room of his progeny (we speak of them by anticipation), that with regard singly to the test of covenant obedience, his course of life was held to be their course, and his act their act; while in every other respect each individual being holy, stood on his own responsibility, and might find fellowship with God immediately for himself. But Christ is the Substitute and Surety of His people, not in one point only, but in all. HE embodies in His own person all the righteousness, and all the strength, that on man's part are to fulfil the covenant, and satisfy the claims to Divine justice; THEY, through breach of the previous compact, being all dead in trespasses and sins. Unless He assume their entire responsibilities—unless His blood atone for their guilt—unless His grace regenerate their souls—unless His finished obedience lend acceptance to their defective services—they are all and every one undone. Not one of them, if he approach God in his own character, but approaches "a consuming fire." Not one can be received with favour except through Him whom that fire purified from all our imputed guiltiness,

and yet did not consume. So the law of righteousness remaining unchanged, and the glory of God continuing to be the highest end of all things, the office of Adam, in his headship, was only by refraining from one sin, to retain for his race the life with God which they already possessed; but the office of God-man, in HIS headship, was on behalf of His children, to endure all human pains, and perform all human services, with a transcendent and victorious efficacy, such as, in the eyes of Eternal Equity, might justly redeem the souls of them all to the life with God which they had forfeited. In short, "the First Adam," as Paul declares it, "was made only a living soul; the second Adam was made a quickening spirit." (1 Cor. xv. 45, 47.) "The first man was of the earth, earthy; the second Man is the Lord from heaven." The first, in his headship, was little more than a REPRESENTATIVE, one son of God, contracting on behalf of many, his equals, and equally accepted; the second, revealed to us as a Peerless One, "the only-begotten of the Father, and over all, God blessed for ever," is declared to be the "One MEDIATOR between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, and testifies of Himself with authority, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me;" but "If a man love me, my Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." (John i. 15; Rom. ix. 5; 1 Tim. ii. 5; John xiv. 6—23.)

III. It is hence apparent, thirdly, that the mediatorship of Christ, as it is founded in His twofold nature, is also to be regarded under a twofold aspect. The office, though vested in one Individual Person, has respect equally to both parties in the covenant. Toward man, the Mediator is God; toward God, He is Man. All of God that man can see, or directly enjoy, is in Christ; and in Christ is all of Man that God can justify or approve. Except through Him, a sinful world can obtain no grace or peace from Heaven; except through Him, Heaven can



receive no pure or well-pleasing sacrifice from a sinful world. In Him, God dwelt of old on earth with His people; and in Him His people now dwell in heavenly places with God. Not only, then,

IV. Fourthly, do the emblems of the positive law recognise this double reference, but the whole system of its worship and ceremonial is built upon the groundwork of this distinction. It is full of figurative representations, that set forth, on one side, the character and gracious acts of God in Christ; and, on the other, the holy privileges, dispositions, and services of true believers in Christ their head.

For the present, then, let us attempt to glance only at the emblematical shapes and aspects in which it pleased the Lord Christ, as the image of God, and the Angel of His presence, to hold communion with men. It is true, that to include many of these under the notion of positive institution or law, would be departing from the strictly accurate use of terms. Yet they all have such express reference to legal ordinances, they tally and correspond with them in so many points, that to abstain from mentioning them in connexion with their co-relatives, would cloud the significance and beauty of the things themselves which we now purpose to contemplate. And some of them, indeed, being the workmanship of men's hands, were framed by explicit direction from God.

It is also to be noted, that as all positive statute must have its foundation in the moral law, and all typical imagery has its prototypes in *reality*, so it is not always easy, in tracing the footsteps of Messiah, before His advent in flesh, to say where the natural ceases and the typical begins. Of prophetic voices, dreams, visions, or direct inspirations, we need not speak; they belong to another category; but many passages of Scripture teach distinctly that, in the days of old, Christ often appeared to the prophets in the manifest shape of a man. When He vouch-

safed His presence after this manner to Abraham in Mamre, and to Jacob in Mahanaim,—to ask whether His human frame or aspect were an illusion impressed on their senses, or rather a temporary creation for the purpose of the moment, things alike easy with God to produce, were an idle question. But it is more interesting to inquire, was the form assumed simply for the convenience of conversing the more freely with men? or was it intended to indicate,—not obscurely, perhaps, to godly and inspired persons,—that Jehovah, whom they saw *clothed*, but only for a little *concealed* in the garb of humanity, was, at a time appointed, permanently to assume our nature and be indeed the promised Seed of the Woman? If the latter,—was not His appearance, then, an emblem? And did he not accordingly, though without formal law, receive a kind of emblematic worship? When Jacob wrestled until the breaking of the day with One concerning whom he says, “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved,” and to whom, when purposing to depart, he answered, “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me,”—what was the struggle but an emblematic agony of supplication? (Gen. xxxii.) When Abraham entertained angels unawares, one of whom, as Moses tells us, was Jehovah, did not his morsel of bread, and the flesh of his calf, tender and good, put off by degrees, in the Patriarch’s mind, its character of merely a hospitable meal, as he began to perceive, until it grew to a certainty, that it was the Lord, the Judge of all the earth, who partook of it; and put on instead the reverence and sacredness of a joyful sacrifice, followed up immediately after by earnest intercessions for the sinful cities of the plain? (Gen. xviii.)

Whatever bearing these appearances of the Lord may be thought to have, however, upon the ancient observances of God’s worship, it cannot be doubted that there was one special, resplendent, and perpetual symbol of His presence, to which the eyes and hearts of His people were to be directed in all their

higher solemnities, and even in their daily prayers. You need not be told that this is the Shechinah—that which in the books of Moses is so constantly designated “the glory of the Lord.”

The particular description and history of this illustrious emblem are best studied in the sacred pages. The leading views which may most fully answer our present purpose, can be conveyed shortly in answer to the few following questions:—

1. What was the emblem?

Its principal and unvarying feature was a shining pillar—a lengthened blaze of perpendicular light—a beautiful and dazzling brightness. It exhibited to the eye what the Apostle John thus expresses to the ear, “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” Often from the midst of this beaming lustre, the voice of God was uttered:—and sometimes within it, as the source and centre from which its glory issued, was seen the likeness as of the Son of Man. Itself changing only in the greater or lesser degree of distinctness with which it appeared, it was attended, according to circumstances, with varying accompaniments, more or fewer—clouds bright or dark surrounded it—a rainbow compassed it above. Four cherubims spread their wings to the four winds of heaven,—beneath the brightness was a pavement of pure sapphire, either for the chariot of the Lord moving on four living wheels, or for His throne as planted on the rock of Mount Sinai, or reared aloft on the floor of heaven. (Exod. xxiv.; Ezek. i.) Elders sometimes are seen surrounding the cherubim;—and sometimes enclosing all on every side are angels and saints ten thousand times ten thousand. Such, in its general aspect being the Shechinah, we may ask, in the next place,

2. Is it many or one?

Already there has been suggested a sufficient answer to this question. The central portion of the symbol—the light—was sometimes seen alone, but it was never absent, though often

veiled. Amid the diversities of the other portions, there is preserved among them such an exact sameness of position, or such an intelligible identity of meaning, that the oneness of the entire representation cannot be overlooked. Wherever it appears to the people or the prophets of God—sensibly or in the spirit—on earth or in heaven—whether in Eden, in Arabia, in Judea, in the visions of the River Chebar, or in the revelations of Patmos, its unity can never be mistaken. In all places, under all circumstances, we recognise, the moment it is manifested, that one self-evidencing glory of the Lord.

But, in the third place,

3. What is specially meant by it? Not merely that God is one, though that also results immediately from what has just been stated; but more particularly that He is God, in covenant with His people for their salvation. It is not the awful Avenger of Paradise pronouncing His curse upon the transgressor; it is the compassionate Saviour of Paradise comforting with promise the heart of the desolate, and, with sacred vestments, clothing his nakedness. Why else did He make His ancient throne a chariot? Why did He bow His heavens and come down? Why did He sojourn visibly among men at all, especially why in the image of man? Why did He compass His seat with the rainbow, at all times an object attractive to sense, and since the flood a token of covenanted mercy? These things of themselves might suggest the gracious relation towards us in which it pleases Him to stand; but it will become much more manifest when we inquire farther in the fourth place,

4. On what occasions, and to what purposes, was His glory wont to draw near?

The first mention of it is made after Adam's expulsion from the garden, when the cherubim and the flaming sword turned every way, to shut him out from all vain confidences in the

broken covenant and its obsolete sacrament the tree of life ; but presented stedfastly on the east that light of His countenance, before which acceptable worship was to be offered through the shedding of blood in sacrifice ; and from the presence of which Cain was expelled, because, refusing to shed the blood of sin-offering, he afterwards, in the paroxysm of his rage and jealousy, shed the blood of his brother. (Gen. iv. 8.) Analogy would suggest, but it is not recorded, that again it was visible, when the Lord shut up Noah and his household in the ark (Gen. vii. 16) ; or when afterwards He smelled the sweet savour of his sacrifice. (Gen. viii. 21.) To Abraham, however, it evidently did approach, when renewing with him the covenant by sacrifice, God, as the usage of men was, passed between the pieces of the burnt-offering, and consumed them, as on so many other occasions, with His own holy fire. (Gen. xv. 17.) Then it appeared to Jacob at Mahanaim, to Moses in the bush, to Israel at the Red Sea for their deliverance, and pre-eminently and awfully at Mount Horeb, when the law was to be given. There, as was formerly hinted, the emblem, in some at least of its less sacred particulars, became to Moses the subject of positive statute, inasmuch as he was commanded to make the ark, and cover it with the mercy-seat bearing the cherubims, that there the glory of the Lord might rest, and thence He might pronounce His oracles of grace and righteousness. There sacrifice was to be offered before Him. There incense was to be burned. There prayer was to be made. Enough, surely, has been said to show that He who dwelt between the cherubims was God in covenant. Something more, however, may be added to prove that as such he ever embraced in the compass of His gracious designs, not one man or one nation merely, but the whole of His people together. In the instances already quoted, this is manifest. In Adam, to whom first he was under this form revealed, and, if you will, in Noah, mankind in general were

embraced. Abraham was the father of all the faithful of all nations ; Israel was the national type of them all. In every thing done or revealed to them, all the children of God have a direct interest, especially in their covenants. We shall find the like universality of purpose, if I mistake not, wheresoever else this glory of the Lord appears :—As to Solomon in the temple, when it was finished, and the ark was placed there ; to Isaiah in the temple, when he prophesied of national apostasy and (vi.) captivity ; to Ezekiel in Chaldea, for the like purposes ; and, finally (for we need not enumerate every case) to John the Apostle, when Christ was to unveil to his view, for the instruction of all, the sins and the sufferings, the achievements and the deliverances of His Church to the end of time. Yes. The Shechinah is the emblem of God in covenant through Christ, and in covenant with all Christ's people.

Once more, in the fifth place—

5. Is this visible glory, in its earthly manifestations, confined to the person of Christ the Mediator? Not absolutely, perhaps, but very nearly. In heaven such glory doubtless belongs to the Father. The Spirit also was symbolised by tongues of fire. But it is very remarkable, that wherever the Father is recorded to have directly spoken from his cloud of glory in the ears of men, it has only been, unless some instance has escaped me, when He appeared to bear express testimony to His Son. The passage in the 23d chapter of Exodus perhaps is not in point, for, though there, the Father speaks, and speaks of His Son, saying, "Behold I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way—beware of him—provoke him not—for my name is in him," it is not stated that He spake thus out of the brightness. Neither is any such appearance spoken of in the passage of John (xii. 28), where the Lord, now incarnate, and soon to die, having prayed, "Father, save me from this hour—but for this cause, came I to this hour : Father, glorify thy name," was answered by



a voice from heaven, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again"—a voice sent "Not because of me," adds the Lord in explanation, "but for your sakes"—that is, evidently, to assist their faith. Even at His baptism, though the heavens were opened, and the voice came, and the Holy Spirit descended, it is not written that the Father's glory was visible. But at His birth the glory of the Lord did shine round about the shepherds, and on the Mount of Transfiguration, when His mortal nature, to strengthen it for the coming agony, obtained at length a bright and blissful anticipation of the glory that should follow—"when his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light"—then also did a bright cloud overshadow Himself and His disciples, "and behold a voice out of the cloud, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him," (Mat. xvii.) What was then His glory when He ascended up to heaven in a cloud? Brighter doubtless than even that in which He afterwards appeared to Saul of Tarsus; since it is compared to the Majesty of His second advent, when He shall come in the clouds of heaven, seated at the right hand of power, and effulgent with the glory of His Father and of all the holy angels. To Him, then, especially, belonged the Divine glory as displayed on earth. In it the homage of all the primitive ages was addressed to Him. Bearing it, as He now does, in the heaven of heavens, to it we, too, under the Gospel, direct our adorations, more especially in our positive observances, when, by baptism, we seek salvation through His resurrection from the dead, (1 Pet. iii. 21,) and when, in the hope of ourselves rising on that day to meet Him, we eat bread and drink wine, to show the Lord's death until He come again. Amen. (1 Cor. xi.)

## LECTURE XXXIV.

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### THE LAW POSITIVE.

#### PATRIARCHAL AND MOSAIC DISPENSATIONS.

THE office of a Mediator, from its very nature, has, in all cases, at least a double reference. In our Lord Jesus Christ especially it looks to both the parties in the covenant of mercy. And here, its aspect towards man is such that only through Him can any real blessing from God descend to any individual of our race; so that practically he is the whole of God to us: and its aspect towards God is such that only through him can any right and acceptable service be presented by any human being to God; so that, as regards the willing advancement of the Divine glory by us, He is the whole of man to God. Remotely and ultimately there does take place, by the loving-kindness of the Lord, a blessed intercourse betwixt the Father and Spirit on the one side, and the souls of believing men on the other; but immediately and directly the whole of that intercourse proceeds and takes effect only in the person of the Mediator, Immanuel, God-man. What Job could not find for the pleading of his individual cause with his chastener, God has found for the conducting of all his transactions with us all,—even “a day’s-man betwixt us, who can lay his hand upon both.”

Accordingly, during the earlier ages of positive law under the new covenant, which were also the times of its largest development, a twofold provision was made, by which Christ as Mediator, and in that capacity made under law, did by the Divine

appointment, on the one hand, present Himself in a visible and glorious symbol, *as God to men*; and did, on the other, either by typical personages divinely commissioned, or by emblematic instruments and elements, and by figurative acts and ministrations, all expressly patterned and enjoined in the written Word, present Himself *as man to God*. His appearances on earth under the former character, whether in human shape or by the Shechinah, were the subject of last lecture: the representation of Him in the latter, through the types of the patriarchal era, and through the various implements and observances of the Mosaic ritual, may suitably employ our attention now.

Whatever in the mediatorial undertaking of Immanuel pertained to the rendering of a human satisfaction to God for the sins and shortcomings of His people, was of necessity accomplished entirely in His own person, without participation in the work, in any respect or in the least degree, by any one of the myriads that were to be saved by it. But where the object was to draw the exiles back again to God's fellowship, and reclaim the transgressors to obedience, the very nature of the task required that the Mediator's power should be exerted in so new-framing the spirits of the alienated, and so reversing their interests as to render the minds, and affections, and energies of each and every one of them, the conscious instruments, the willing and joyful concurrents in the process of their own restoration. For the ends and purposes of atonement, I repeat, He stood before God as a Surety to acquit—Himself alone—the terrible responsibilities of a guilty people; but for the purpose of bringing His redeemed to the Father, He approaches in the character of a commander and leader, the living head of living members, presenting to God a converted and sanctified multitude, all whose righteous works are wrought as well as accepted in him only. That the Mediator, in this department of His function, may be indeed the whole of man towards God, it is evident that He must exercise,

on His part, a mighty influence over the objects of His love,—the influence of His Holy Spirit; and that they must be, on their part, not passive and quiescent spectators merely of His deeds, but actual sharers of His very life, and strenuous fellow-workers in His holy acts and services.

Let us mark the nature of the Mediator's power as here put forth, and its effect in assimilating all His disciples to Himself,—so shall we understand the beauty and significancy of types and emblems.

1. That sinners may be brought back to God they must be illuminated. They must know His name, His law, His redemption, the outgoings of His wrath and of His love. In all these things the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, is their teacher (John i. 18). Qualified by His Divine knowledge of the Father's counsel, He vitally reveals to them the Father by His word and Spirit; He exerts over their minds the mighty authority of a heavenly prophet—and they, filled in their souls with the light of His truth, diffuse it through His grace to many around them. They, according to their measure, become prophets in their turn, and the teachers of prophets.

2. That sinners may be brought back to God, they must find an open way to His peace and favour. But Christ was glorified to be an High Priest by Him that said unto Him, “Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.” As He saith also in another place, “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Heb. v. 5, 6). In this office He offers His blood acceptably as an atonement for all the sin of His people, and intercedes on their behalf successfully, that the Father may bestow upon them richly all things pertaining to life and to godliness. They come near, are received, are blessed. Daily, in order to be forgiven, they present before God, by faith, the blood which Christ Himself presents continually. They offer the supplications for themselves and for others which Christ, in His intercession, offers for

all. They present their bodies, as members of His body, a living sacrifice. They tell their fellow-sinners of the access granted them. They exhort every man his brother in like manner to draw near. In acts of social worship they go before, that others may follow. In their humble grade, each becomes a priest, and the trainer of priests.

3. That sinners may be brought back to God, they must be made willing to receive the law of the Great King, in the belief, that He will accept their renewed homage and reward their imperfect obedience. But One who descended from the throne of heaven, and became a servant, that by death He might expiate their revolt, and then Himself teach them the way to reconciliation,—He is made vicegerent over them. “I have set my king upon My holy hill of Zion. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee. I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.” (Psalms ii. 6—8.) The people see this wonder, they submit to so gracious a sovereign, and in so doing they submit to God. They love His service, they wait for His inheritance. Entrusted in His kingdom with a portion of His authority, they rule for His honour,—the magistrate his subjects, the pastor his flock, the parent his offspring, the householder his domestics, and every man rules as steward over the share of His Lord’s goods that has been committed to his charge. Lowly as the earthly place of each may be, he is Israel, a prince with God, while he lives, and is set to train the princes of the generation following.

Thus the Lord, the Mediator, in the exercise of His three offices, not only puts forth their power, but impresses their image, as well as that of His own heart and character, upon all His disciples. As the proper seat, however, of these offices, in their supremacy, is heaven, there, except during the short periods of His first and second advent, it behoves His personal presence also to dwell; and yet, as it is through the efficiency of

these offices, under the grace of the Holy Ghost, that the children of God are evermore gathered out from among the nations, it became necessary, especially before the coming of our Lord in flesh, to hold them up to the view of mankind in a manner much more conspicuous and impressive than the knowledge, godliness, and upright living diffused among saints in a private station could possibly present.

A portion, therefore, of their threefold authority, was conferred upon every father or head of a household. When the household multiplied itself, and became in the larger sense a family, its head became the patriarch of that family. When the family propagated its branches into a tribe, and the tribe again expanded into a nation, his official importance and dignity were enlarged, in proportion to the multiplication of the souls beneath his care; and so the image which he bore of the Mediator's heavenly powers and functions, came at length to be exalted in high places, the object of admiration and reverence to mankind. It left meanwhile its impress unimpaired in all the humbler grades of life through which it had ascended, because within every minor section of society that had been inclosed by the greatest, there arose a succession of leaders to take in each the patriarch's place, until the circles, narrowing still as they descended to a lower level among the people, became at last coincident with their domestic hearths, where the original model of the entire system was preserved inviolate.

Such appears to have been the structure of Patriarchal society. Could the scheme have been fully completed, and always kept in spiritual operation, it might alone have sufficed, not only to represent before the eyes of men on earth the glory of the heavenly Mediator, but to maintain His dominion in their hearts. The incapacity of particular persons, however, and the sinfulness of mankind generally, prevented this result. It became necessary, therefore, that extraordinary individuals, more or less



fully *types* of Christ, and bearing in an eminent measure, one or two, or all of His offices, should, from time to time, be lifted high on the scene of the world's affairs, in open sight of all men. These acting expressly in name of their Prototype in heaven, were honoured, usually for centuries together, to advance the prosperity of His cause, and the glory of His name. This happened pre-eminently in the patriarchal age. Let us briefly collect the instances.

I. And first, the highest place belongs to those who held all the three offices, and whose mission was to all the seed of faith. —Adam himself was such; for did he not learn from God what he was to teach his children? Did he not offer sacrifice for himself and them before the Shechinah? And in whose hands but his did God place the supreme rule, under Himself, of family, tribe, nation, and, finally, of the faithful at large among the human race?

Noah, by the like Divine appointment, succeeded to the like honour. He was a prophet as the Scripture shows. He offered acceptable sacrifice for all that survived the flood. He promulgated the newly-revealed laws of heaven, and enforced them, denouncing the curse and the blessing. He possessed, and, in a manner, portioned out the earth.

Abraham was specially called of God to the same threefold dignity and power. He was the Father of all the faithful, as well as of all the seed of Israel. The friend of God, he conversed with Messiah face to face, and taught His law, and the tenor of His promise, to his own household and posterity first, and manifestly also to the people among whom he sojourned. Having covenanted with God, like Noah, by a sacrifice of all clean victims, a sacrifice kindled by the fire of God from heaven, he built his altar afterwards wheresoever he pitched his tent, worshipping openly before the Canaanite. "Hear, my lord," said the sons of Heth, speaking truly, "thou art a mighty

prince, (a prince of God,) among us, in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead." As a prince, accordingly, he framed treaties with princes, he made peace and war, he portioned the spoil among kings, though he declined to share it. Himself but a stranger and a pilgrim in Palestine and on the earth, yet of God did he receive the grant of Palestine for the seed of Isaac, and of God was he made heir of the world for the seed of faith.

Once more, to close the patriarchal age and open that of Israel, Moses was called of God, and invested with the Mediatorship of the Sinaitic covenant, branching, like that of the covenant of grace itself, into the three indispensable offices—indispensable each to one great class of human exigencies—adequate in their union to the supply of all. He mediates between God and His peculiar and separate people, Israel. He converses with God face to face amid the lightnings of Horeb, and within the tabernacle of witness before the mercy-seat. By sacrifice as a priest, he ordains and consecrates the very priesthood. He is a king in Jeshurun, appointing magistrates and captains, dispensing law and justice, executing punishments and distributing rewards—and though he enters not in person the promised land, still, as the ordained of God, he designates its boundaries, regulates its division, and authoritatively determines the internal economy and outward relations of its destined conquerors. But why enlarge? When we connect his history with that of the other renowned saints and fathers previously mentioned, and consider how great was the efficacy and the lustre of their three offices, each so different from the other two, and yet all so constantly united to the exclusion of every other, and this in such a succession of incomparable persons, that filled, if not with the duration of their actual lives, yet with the fresh remembrance of their greatness, the whole period from the Exodus up to the creation:—and more especially when we think of it, that they were not more certainly sent of God than known

and acknowledged of all men to be so—it seems difficult to imagine any system of means more admirably calculated either to keep alive just views of the *true* character of Messiah Himself during the season of long waiting; or to cheer believing hearts with bright anticipations of the glory to be revealed, when the Desire of all nations at length should come.

We need not do more than glance, but to glance is necessary, at those illustrious persons invested less completely as to number, though, perhaps, not less eminently in degree, with the same offices, as the worthies now enumerated, who arose in the intervals of their appearance. Such was Abel, an accepted priest, and Enoch a prophet of the foremost rank. Such was Melchisedek, a priest and king united, perhaps a prophet also; but in his recorded characters, higher even than Abraham, whom he solemnly blessed in the name of the God of the whole earth. And what it concerns us very particularly to remark with regard to him is, that he was expressly raised up, his name bestowed, and his history framed, both in what it records, and in what it suppresses, for the very purpose of supplying a distinct image of Christ as a Priest upon His throne, first the King of Righteousness, and then the King of Peace. All these, upon the testimony of Scripture, are known to have flourished before the days of Moses; while it were surely a very unwarrantable assumption to take it for granted, that these, and a few others, who arose a little later, were all the personages of the like description, who illuminated, by their inspired wisdom, and gracious deeds, the scattered families of the primitive time. Much more probable it is that they are the few rescued from that oblivion into which the many are fallen—the many whom God, from time to time, graciously raised up in different lands, and qualified to preserve among men the remembrance of His promise. On supposition that, for a lengthened period, a large number of such existed, the effect produced by their humble

ministries, when taken in connexion with the world-wide renown of those chiefest men of God, if it were at all equal to the means employed, must surely have been great; and could we trace the religious decays of those ages as distinctly as the backslidings of our own, it would probably be apparent then as now, not that the truth of God was lost to men for want of sufficient teachers, but that their teachers were taken away in wrath, "because they desired not to retain God in their knowledge."

Hitherto our thoughts have been directed chiefly to the types of Messiah's offices exhibited before the law. From this epoch downwards, one remarkable change is observable. Whilst all the three continue to be strikingly represented, there seem never to be more than two of them combined in the same person. We have, for instance, Samson a judge, Eli a priest, Rehoboam a king, who each held his office singly. Again, we find David a king and prophet, Ezra a priest and prophet, and later, but not until after the closing of the Old Testament canon, the priestly house of the Maccabees swaying the civil sceptre. Through the whole Mosaic period, in short, all the three functions are constantly revived, or rather preserved in almost an unbroken series, each occasionally bursting forth into extraordinary splendour, but never all combining their rays to illustrate the same man. It would seem as if the means were used to originate and preserve in the world a just and most vivid idea of the functions themselves, in order that their genuineness might be unquestioned when they should all assemble once more, and shine with unprecedented majesty and glory in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. To heighten their impression as so displayed, they appear, for the most part, and during a lengthened season immediately preceding His manifestation, to have fallen much into decay. The Priesthood had sunk into a state of wretched servitude in the hands of wicked men. The Royalty had passed from the heirs of David's house to enthrone a Herod

or a Tiberius. If Prophecy retained her honours undiminished, it was because to her pertained the privilege of heralding the Saviour's advent; and even of John the Baptist, "than whom there had not arisen a greater among them that are born of women," her closing testimony by his own lips is this—"He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for He was before me. He must increase, but I must decrease." And, indeed, when the Lord had entered publicly upon His sublime and Godlike travail,—what man ever spoke like this Man, or demonstrated His prophetic mission by so many marvellous works of grace and power? What priest ever offered sacrifice or incense worthy to be more than the shadow, if so much as the shadow, of His all prevailing death and intercession—His death on earth, His intercession at God's right hand in heaven? The kings of this world, indeed, have displayed an earthly power and grandeur which He affected not; He did not strive nor cry, neither was His voice heard in the streets—"Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." (Matt. xxi. 5.) A time is hastening on, however, when even His worldly greatness shall cast all rivalry into the shade; when He shall rule the hostile nations with a rod of iron, and shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. And then, at length, wherever the sons of men are found, there, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment: and a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of waters in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Nay, before yet He had left the world, what was His brightness on Tabor? And what is ever since the effulgence of His Majesty on high? What multitudes, from generation to generation, justified through His blood, and renovated by His truth and grace, are in the present age rescued, as from out of the gates of hell

by the right hand of His royal power, and so appear complete in Him before the face of His Father? And when the great day of consummation at last shall dawn; when the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; when the dead shall first be raised; and then, in the twinkling of an eye, the living be changed, like them, into the Saviour's image, both soul and body; when they shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so to be for ever with the Lord; O how brightly then shall humanity shine in Him and in them, when, once for all, He presents it perfected unto the Father—He the bridegroom, and the Church His bride! He radiant in the Father's glory, and she too as clothed in His lustre, "a glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!" He the Head "over all, God blessed for ever," and she His body, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all!"

Thus the starry gleaming of the types is lost in the blaze of the risen sun, and thus does the Mediator, in His threefold office, become the whole of righteous manhood toward God.



## LECTURE XXXV.

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### THE LAW POSITIVE.

#### MOSAIC SYMBOLS.

WE have already endeavoured to see how during the period betwixt the fall of Adam and the Exodus of Israel from Egypt, Christ, the Mediator of the covenant of grace, having respect to both the parties in that compact, presented Himself as God to men by the Shechinah—which ever after He continued to do—and presented Himself as man to God, in the three exalted offices pertaining to His mediatorship, those of prophet, priest, and king. By the power of these respectively, having enlightened the minds of men to believe God, and moved their hearts to worship Him, and subdued their wills to obey Him, He summed up all His people's faith, adoration, and obedience in His own, and so proffered Himself and them in one, with acceptance unto the Father. To preserve the knowledge of His spiritual dignities among men by more than their images in individual saints, He raised up during the patriarchal ages a *series* of inspired personages, endowed with one or two or all of these high offices; and in particular—for we must not, in the blaze of supernatural gifts, forget the light of ordinary functions—He constituted the fathers of families, and next to them the first-born, His representatives, who should, as matter of constant duty, deliver the doctrine of truth, conduct the ordinances of worship, and enforce the laws of righteousness among their dependents. These, the human emblems of Messiah's person, continued also during the Mosaic era,

and in a measure, though grown dim, like tapers where the sun is shining, they continue still. But at the giving of the law in Horeb, not only they, but, together with them, that glorious token itself of Christ's *divine* presence, were all harmoniously embodied in the system and spectacle of the Mosaic symbols. This is the precise truth which now calls for our attention.

I. First, then :—To speak of a system of visible symbols is to say that there is a corresponding system of truths or facts of which they are the figurative representations. Would we therefore clearly understand the import and spirit of the entire Jewish ceremonial, we must begin with contemplating, in their main particulars at least, and in their mutual relations, the great realities of which they are the shadows. Imagine us, then, transported into the wilderness of Sinai, and stationed in view of the mountain, after its terrors have all passed away, and just when Israel—the instruments and ordinances of their worship now complete, and the movements and disposition of their hosts all determined and regulated by the divine command—have finished their first day's journey from Horeb towards Canaan, and, ere the sun go down, are peacefully encamped in order on the plain. What now are the great living spiritual realities which our mind's eye beholds? Here, first of all, is a particular spot (Num. i. 50, ii. 2, 3, 10, 18, 25), marked and known, where the God of Abraham is present—present in essence and in power (for we speak not yet of symbols) to hold living conference and fellowship with such as truly seek him there. Here, consequently, is Christ, the Mediator, in the exercise of His office, conducting in His own person this blessed intercourse. Around Him, towards the four corners of the world, but not afar off, are the four encampments of His immediate ministers, Priest and Levite, all servants of Jehovah in outward act, and some in spirit and in truth. A space removed beyond these, but in the same directions,—the twelve tribes of Israel, under their twelve princes,—

parted also into four divisions, three tribes to each, have pitched their tents and planted their banners,—all circumcised men, the natural posterity of Abraham, and some doubtless, with all their backslidings, the children of his faith. Yet the men of this last description, the spiritual seed, are not all compassed in the circuit of that encampment, spacious as it is ; but not a few beloved children of God, we may hope, still live beyond it on every hand in the earth, dispersed far and near among the nations. The fact that God, in the person of His Son, dwells thus in the midst of His assembled multitudes, is alone sufficient to assure us that he has entered into covenant with them ; and what that covenant is we are not left at a loss to determine : it is the promise of salvation made in Eden to the mother of all living, and since specially renewed to Abraham :—“ In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed ;” blessed in the free forgiveness of their sins, and their deliverance from death—as many as believe in the Saviour ; and blessed in the regeneration of their souls by the Holy Spirit unto all meetness, through a life of holiness, for the enjoyment of an everlasting inheritance in glory.

So much for the actual and spiritual. Let us now, secondly,

II. Pass to what is emblematic or representative in this wonderful scene.

And, here it is needful to remark, that the expressive figures so abundant in the Scriptures, are of two kinds. One class are of importance only as figures, and are nothing in themselves. Such was the brazen serpent, lifted up by Moses, inestimable in its symbolic uses, but, in itself, *nehushtan*, merely a piece of brass. Another class are of themselves considerable matters, and yet serve as types, often just because they are specimens, as it were, or samples, of other matters, the same in kind with them, but vastly more enlarged, and more momentous. Thus, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was a true and terrible

instance of the punishment inflicted by God upon sinners in soul and body; and yet these are cities spoken of by Jude (v. 7) as "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." The actual judgment, doubtless, very terrible, was past in a day,—the judgment foreshown endures for ever. It must not disturb our thoughts, therefore, in considering the Mosaic economy, its subjects, and its history, if we should have to regard many things as emblematical, which are much more than emblems. Still less must it surprise us,—for that too requires notice,—to find all that we know of the standing imagery of the Patriarchal dispensation, adopted and expanded to its full dimensions in the constitutions of Sinai.

But what was there in our view of Israel, as they journeyed from the Mount, that could, in accordance with Scripture, be thought emblematical? Every thing peculiar in it that was cognisable by sight, whatever else it might import, must in fact be held as bearing a symbolic meaning. All things that are present there in truth, are present there in symbol also, whether it be God Himself, or His Christ, His redeemed people, or His saving covenant.

1. First, in the very centre of the camp (Exod. xxv. 10, 18, 22; Ps. lxxx. 1; Exod. xl. 34,) we behold a pillar of cloud overhanging the tabernacle of witness, with a stream of light issuing out of the holy place from above the vail. So it appeared while the sun was going down; but as the twilight darkened into night, the whole kindled itself into a beaming glory, that illuminated the wilderness far and wide. This is the flame beheld by Adam in the East of Paradise, and by Moses in the bush. Once it filled the host of Israel with fear, when in thunder and earthquake it flamed up to heaven before their eyes from the peaks of Horeb. But now it is removed from thence, and from all places where it appeared to saints or prophets in the days of old,—to dwell as in a chosen tent, amid the

thousands of Israel, their shade all day long against the burning heat, and their unfailing light in the darkness. This is the Shechinah, the visible sign of the presence with them of God in Christ Jesus.

2. East of the tabernacle, nigh where the tents of the Levites, the sons of Korah, are pitched, and immediately by the door of the tabernacle, we see standing a man, with all the marks of age upon him, except its decays. (Exod xxxiv. 29; Deut. xxxiv. 7; Gal. iii. 19.) His countenance darts forth such rays of light as would dazzle us but for the veil that softens them. He is holding converse with God as a man with his friend. This is Moses, the Mediator of the Sinaitic covenant. He is prophet, priest, and king in Israel. He transacts all things on behalf of the people with God, and on behalf of God with the people. He is the emblem of Christ Himself, the mediator of the covenant of grace.

3. On every side of the pavilion where God's glory rests, and where his servant mediates, are spread a mighty people, that already count their tribes by myriads, and are the destined progenitors of a nation numerous as the stars of heaven, and, like the sand of the sea, for multitude. They are the descendants of one whom God separated from his country and kindred, and constituted a stranger and a pilgrim among men, that he might also preserve the race to be derived from him a separate people, both while they were few in number, and after they had increased to many, choosing them for Himself, to be "a holy nation," "His own peculiar treasure." Thus they become representatives of a yet wider and vaster assembly, the Church of Christ, whether called of old, or yet to be gathered from among all nations after the Lord shall come:—such of their number as are Israelites indeed, being a figure as well as a portion of those who were predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world; (Eph. i. 5.) and

such as are not Israel, though they are of Israel, being representatives of all who in the gospel age shall have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. (2 Tim. iii. 5.)

This people grew to their strength in Egypt, and becoming the objects of jealousy to the inhabitants of the land, were grievously enslaved and oppressed. Parallel with this is the treatment ever reserved for the VISIBLE Church of Christ, when she becomes strong and faithful enough to advance the cause of God against the seed of wickedness; and, like to this is the trouble and bondage of Christ's SPIRITUAL Church, when her conscience has been once awakened to the sense of her native guilt and wretchedness. Then she groans and sighs for deliverance from the thralldom of Satan and sin. It would be tedious, however, to pursue the parallel step by step, adducing the points of resemblance on both sides. It is but tracing the progress of Israel, of the church visible, and of the true church in terms of the Mosaic narrative, and, if we add the lights of prophecy to those of history, we shall find the leading statements alike true of all these three communities, though of each in its own peculiar sense. By a strong hand and by solemn judgments the Mediator leads forth each from its own peculiar Egypt, to feel its own utter helplessness, both temporal and spiritual, as in the wilderness; and to acknowledge its absolute dependence upon God. Each in its own peculiar character is led into the deep valley at the foot of Mount Sinai, to hear the law of righteousness proclaimed in its purity by the VOICE, and vindicated in its majesty by the TERRORS, of God. Each through fresh interposition of the Mediator, finds peace in embracing the promises, submits to the sovereign dispensation, is ordered and settled, in spiritual things under its spiritual rulers; in secular things under its secular princes, both powers meeting and terminating alike in the Mediator's hand. Each community, in the manner that suits its several nature, is led, throughout its pilgrimage,



by the cloudy, fiery pillar, is nourished by the bread that cometh down from heaven, and refreshed with the waters that issue living from the smitten rock. That portion in each which lusts, distrusts, rebels, is purged out and destroyed by a succession of unsparing judgments in the wilderness; and that which in the matters proper to itself accepts, believes, obeys, is in due time and through all obstacles, led prosperously into its own peculiar land of promise—Israel on to Palestine, (Josh. xxi. 43, xxiii. 1,)—the Church visible into the safety and blessedness of millennial times, (Dan. vii. 27; Rev. xx. 4,)—and the brotherhood of saints, after much anticipation on earth by the diligent, into the consummated rest of the celestial Paradise. (1 Thes. iv. 14).

From our point of observation then in the desert of Arabia, we have seen, in these emblems, three objects of the most sacred interest and importance,—God Himself in the Shechinah, His Christ in the Mediatorship of Moses, and His church universal both visible and spiritual, in the tribes of Jacob. A fourth object yet invites our contemplation, namely—

#### 4. The emblematic Covenant.

By this expression it will easily be seen is not meant a covenant that has no distinct reality, or direct intent of its own, apart from its figurative significance. The special effects of the transaction between God and Israel in Horeb have followed that wonderful people in all their interests, both worldly and spiritual, through the long ages, as well of their declension as prosperity, and continue in full operation and energy at this day. It is certain, nevertheless, that the Sinaitic compact, both in the manner of its promulgation, and in its integral provisions, had respect, enigmatically, to far more large and important objects than its literal terms express. Let us shortly mark a few of them.

When God announced His presence by wrapping the moun-

tain in flames, amid "blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words," (Heb. xii. 18, 19); what was this but an expression, for it was not an instance of the frowning and threatening wrath against sin that darkened first over Eden at the fall, that ever since hath shrouded the world in the gloom of death, and at the judgment day shall settle down upon the dwelling place of wickedness into the blackness of darkness for ever? What was the continual ascending and descending of Moses between God and the people but an image of Christ's intercession in closing the compact? What was the blood that sprinkled the book of the covenant and the bodies of the people, but the atoning death of Christ prefigured? What was the purification of the whole assembly, the washing of their persons and garments ere they approached the mount, but the sanctification, in emblem, of the Holy Ghost? We must hasten, however, to the substance of the covenant—its requirements first, and then its promises and comminations.

1. Of its requirements (Exod. xx.) the ten commandments were first divulged, uttered, and alone uttered by the voice, and written with the finger of God, as the eternal law of righteousness, upon the foundation of which alone God can ever hold fellowship with men, or build the promise of His favour, or rest the ordinances of His house. They are vocal or lettered emblems of the spiritual rectitude, written in His heavenly will,—written in the soul of His Son,—written in the hearts of His people.

In connexion with these (Deut. iv. 5—8) we need but *name* the detailed provisions of the forensic law, in their very strictness far less severe than those of any other code then existing; and thus indicative of the larger charity and more lenient equity between man and man that should arise spontaneously from the more abundant light and grace of the Gospel age.

But the law of ceremonies calls for special remark (Col. ii.

16, 17, Heb. x. 1). It is the legal embodying and proclamation of the Gospel. It would require much larger comment than we can now find room for, had we not been occupied with the most important particulars of it during the course of our other exercises. In the sanctuary, its vessels, and its services, we find the Lord the Mediator exhibited in both His relations under multiplied forms. The great central emblem, which represents Him as the angel of God's presence to men, is the ark of the covenant. So far as it was formed by human hands it adumbrated, apparently, the human nature of Christ incarnate. Within it was the law, written on the tables of stone: "Yea thy law," as He speaks by the mouth of David (Psalm xl.), "is within my heart." Above it was the mercy-seat, the propitiatory, in correspondence with which Paul testifies of Him, that "God had set him forth as a propitiation, through faith in his blood." But over all, resting between the cherubim, was that chiefest portion of the complex emblem which man could not frame—the pillar of glorious light, expressive of the Triune Godhead, and especially the Godhead of Christ. Towards the whole was all worship directed; and hence were all responses given. From this throne of salvation were seen at hand the cherubims, emblems of Christ's immediate ministers; next the walls of the tabernacle, emblems of His spiritual household; and then enclosing all, the court of the tabernacle, expressive probably of the professing Church.

But reversing the prospect, do we find the same Mediator, veiled in the shadows of the temple *worship*, presenting the services of His people, as their representative, to God present with Himself in the most holy place? Could we find no other image of His dignities in this capacity, surely Aaron alone, with his priestly robes, his golden tiara, his prophetic spirit, and his solemn duties, might all satisfy our natural expectations. But in truth the high-priest, being a man, appears only to have typified,

and that but partially, the human nature of Christ; for, secluded from the altars, he was nothing. Then, in sacrifice, he could not offer himself, but only some other victim, and, in intercession, he could not present his own desire or prayer as acceptable, but only the appointed incense. These he brought near when the Divine priest himself was present in the Brightness. In the other provisions of the Holy places, however, the Lord is doubly symbolised according to the twofold functions of His priesthood. The altar of burnt offering, with its holy fire consuming the sacrifice, presents, it would seem, His Godhead supporting His created nature to endure the atoning death. The altar of incense again, with its fire from the other altar, raising the smoke of sweet odour before the vail, represents His Godhead upholding His created nature to plead His high cause on behalf of His elect before the throne of God. Nay, is there not another memorial of Him still, an abridgment such as the case required of the other two? And was not the sprinkling of the blood of atonement once a year within the vail, and the fuming of the golden censer just at that time also, in presence of the Shechinah itself, a token that He was to enter, once for all, into the heavenly sanctuary, there to proffer *once*, both His sufferings and prayers, on behalf of us who believe, and there sit down at the right hand of God, an high-priest, able to save to the very uttermost those who come to God by Him, seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for them? Thus we find everything in the spectacle before us emblematical; and not only so, but we find system of emblems within system, and figure running parallel with figure,—that, just as the written law and the prophets taught this favoured people with line upon line, and precept upon precept, so the vessels of the sanctuary, and the actions of the instituted service, might lead their souls to the knowledge and faith of the Messiah, by shining semblance within semblance, and by one set of solemn ceremonies, fitted still to illustrate and supplement another.

## LECTURE XXXVI.

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### THE LAW POSITIVE.

#### ITS BEARING UPON THE PROMISE.

WE have attempted to trace the history of positive law under the covenant of grace down to the period of the Lord's advent, and have found the Mediator to be the centre and sum of its emblematic and ceremonial system, first during the patriarchal age, that is, from Adam to Moses; and next, in all that was most essential, and most peculiar, to the arrangements of the Mosaic economy. It will well requite the labour of our farther inquiries, if viewing the Sinaitic covenant in a broader light, and considering it as an integral part of the great plan of God's dealing with sinful men, from first to last, in His twofold character, as a just God and a Saviour, we can discover the main ends contemplated, and the main objects secured by this beautiful and wonderful institution. All sound conceptions of its design and spirit manifestly depend upon a right understanding of its position as an intermediate scheme, which, by adopting and expanding to its full dimensions the older system, and at the same time adding whatever was necessary of its own, made effectual provision for the introduction and establishment of a better dispensation.

As no fellowship can exist between God and man, except through the One Mediator, announced from the beginning; and as it pleased God, notwithstanding, that, ere Christ was born or suffered, four thousand years of the world's history should pass

away, it follows naturally, that the reign of grace on earth should divide itself into two great periods, elapsing, the one under the promise given; the other, under the promise fulfilled. The covenant of Israel had important bearings upon the interests of both periods. Extending through fifteen centuries to conclude the former, and terminating at the commencement of the latter, it wrought during all that time, on the one side, to confer substance and power upon the *expectancy* of the promise, and, on the other, to secure first, and then to demonstrate, the *fulfilment* of the promise.

I. We may begin, then, with reviewing the influence of the law of Moses upon the promise, while its main blessing, the appearance of Christ, as "the woman's seed," was yet in prospect. The force and constancy of the disposition manifested by all mankind to forget or put away from them this only hope of life for their souls, will best establish the unspeakable importance of such means as proved sufficient, to so considerable an extent, and for so long a time as did the law, effectually to counteract it. How instructive, as well as melancholy, is the fact, that no sooner had the two first brothers of our race come to years of ripe understanding, and free choice, than one of them not only rejected the Saviour, and corrupted His ordinance, but slew the other for abiding faithful. The distinction of races which followed, when God had raised up a man to supply the place of His earliest martyr, could not long defer the victory of worldliness over the truth. In vain did Adam maintain his personal testimony for almost nine hundred years. In vain did a venerable descent of long-lived patriarchs, whose ages overlapped each other for many centuries, combine their counsels and their exertions to stay the spreading Atheism. Though one prophet proclaimed aloud (Jude 14), "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly



deeds which they have ungodly committed," receiving testimony of his acceptance with God by being translated alive to heaven; and, though another gave warning, that except men repented they should all perish by the waters of a flood; demonstrating his own faith, by encountering, during many years, the toil, and cost, and scorn, of building an ark for the saving of his house; the apostasy, notwithstanding, made way, until only the eight persons of Noah's own family, and not all even of them, retained their trust in a Redeemer. The deluge past, how soon was its solemn lesson forgotten, though seconded by fresh laws, fresh promises, fresh visits of mercy from the Lord. Ham speedily incurs the curse of his father. By the time that the families of mankind had sufficiently multiplied again to have the earth divided among them by its Creator, they reject His partition, to pursue their own projects, and exalt their own renown, through deeds of usurpation and blood. The scene that first witnessed their strife and confusion gave birth also to their earliest idolatries. Forgetting or disowning the true Shechinah, they sought another in the sun, and multiplied it into all the host of heaven. Their sovereigns became hunters of men. Their priests invented sacrifices of their own, and offered them to Baal—their prophets degenerated into vain dreamers and diviners. Thereafter, even in a neighbourhood, and in an age, when a burning and shining light had now again been kindled, how disfigured and perverted does the patriarchal system appear in perhaps the last recorded instance of its worship that deserves the name. Balak, a king of Moab, a descendant of Lot, hating the race of Abraham, and ready to attack them, but for his fears, offers on seven altars the legitimate victims of ancient sacrifice, but offers them in the hope of prevailing with God to recal the promise on which all true sacrifice rests; and this he does by the advice of a prophet whose heart longs for riches to be earned by cursing Israel, even while the Spirit of God is dictating, and

His terrors compelling him to utter a blessing—the very blessing of the covenant. We need but call to mind for a moment the fragments of profane history that are extant, concerning not Assyria only, or Egypt, but all the ancient nations, even the most civilized, to assure ourselves how universally, and how rapidly, in the decay of the primeval economy, all doctrine sunk into fable, all worship into gross superstition, all power into despotism and robbery. Nor can it fail to awaken our admiration, if we duly apprehend how, through the call of Abraham, one *oasis*, green and fertile, was preserved unburied by the shifting sands of this moral desert for well nigh two thousand years.

With this memorable event,—the call of Abraham and the renewal in his person of the original promise,—the covenant of Sinai is so intimately connected, that of neither can the design be completely understood except when illustrated and explained by that of the other. Without the grace and truth of the Abrahamic promise, the Mosaic institute could have given life to no one. Without the defence and, as it were, *conveyance* of the Mosaic institute, all memory, nay, humanly speaking, all ascertainable accomplishment of the promise must have failed. But in the actual providence of God, a saving efficacy was associated by the promise with visible figures and carnal ordinances; and in return a personal, nay, a national interest of the most palpable and tenacious nature, was, by the legal ordinances and privileges, attached to truths the most spiritual, and to events the most remote and most incomprehensible.

Now, in order to preserve the doctrine of grace incorrupt among the chosen race, and to give it full advantage for their salvation, two objects appear to have been simultaneously and stedfastly pursued throughout the whole tenor both of their institutions and their history. The *first* was to keep them effectually separate from all other nations; and the *second* to preserve them fraternally and religiously united among themselves. In

the occurrences of Abraham's individual life, we see the germs and similitudes of all that was most characteristic or peculiar in the destinies of his children. First of all, he is severed far and for ever from his country and from his kindred. In the land appointed for his residence, he must pass all his days as a stranger and sojourner:—burdensome, therefore, especially as his nomad wealth and numbers increased, to the ancient possessors. He obtains from God a grant for his posterity of all their country—no likely recommendation to their kindness. His pure religion and life are a continual rebuke to their corruptions, and must in no small measure have roused against him the feeling expressed by the men of Sodom against his kinsman, "This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge." (Gen. xix. 9.) Offensive as his religion was, not only by its pure spirituality, but by the very ordinance that sealed its profession, it claimed the obedience of all to the exclusion of every other faith; and this is what the world cannot tolerate. All these causes of separation continued and were aggravated in the days of his son. In those of his grandson and his twelve children, they were embittered by mutual injury and aggression. After a time, famine supervening heightened the offence of encroachment, and, at length, before any blending of families could take place, drove them forth, a distinct and a united body into Egypt. Here the authority of Joseph planted them all in one locality, while, by their profession as shepherds, they were an abomination to the Egyptians. Presently, under the administration of their brother and protector, that nation, with few exceptions, lost their free property in the soil—a just, and yet most unpleasant arrangement.—Years pass on, and the seed of Israel multiply in their isolated unity. Formidable by their strength, distinct in their interests, posted in the very gate and avenue of Egypt,—the only pass by which a powerful enemy could invade it, and by which, in fact, the reigning dynasty had

entered and possessed that garden of the world,—they became the objects of political hatred and jealousy—were enslaved, oppressed, and murdered. Now, the God of their father interposes, and, by judgments never to be forgotten, rescues them triumphantly from a power that thought to crush them into insignificance. Conducting them, now a mighty nation, to the footstool of His throne in Horeb, He secludes them by the barriers of seas, and rocks, and sands, from all near intercourse with the heathen, except it were in battle, and shuts them up to communion with himself for forty years; until the stains of their previous fellowship with strangers have been washed away, and the impress of His own truth and sanctity, so far as reluctant flesh can bear it, has been stamped upon all their thoughts and habits.

Here it was that those ordinances of the law, so singular, so various, were instituted, of which we have already spoken largely, and the working of which, to keep them outwardly separate, while internally united, will best be seen, where it was most effectual, in the land of their inheritance. Advancing thitherward, the tribes that were afterwards to be their nearest neighbours, the children of Esau and of Lot, though they must not be dispossessed of the countries promised of God to their fathers, yet failed not, as Israel passed their borders, both to give and to receive certain causes of offence and umbrage that served to keep the nations apart for many generations. But as for the inhabitants of Palestine itself, the Israelites were expressly appointed to inflict upon them the vengeance of an offended God. They were to gain possession of their promised hills, and fields, and cities, by warlike inroad upon the natives, proceeding, through unmitigated hostility, to utter extermination; and so far as they were faithful to their commission, such was their actual progress. Execution and slaughter of this description could not fail to implant feelings of hereditary enmity in the

minds of the kindred races around, especially as it was wrought in the quarrel of a God whose holiness they hated like all other men, whose presence reproached their own gods as vanities, and condemned their whole worship as abominable and profane. The very land of Canaan, too, was a kind of sacred enclosure, divided by strong natural boundaries from all the nearest regions, so as to debar the inhabitants from familiar intercourse with foreigners, and bind them the more entirely to each other:—a SACRED enclosure, for God of old had marked it as His peculiar property, that He might bestow it, according to promise, upon His peculiar people. They, knowing themselves from the days of their father Abraham to be a chosen seed, and glorying in the distinction, received every man his fields and his dwelling by lot, as a gift specially designated for him by God's own hand. He clung to it tenaciously. No brother even could purchase it of him irrevocably to dispossess his family. No scion of another stock than Jacob's could make property of it at all. If a Gentile came in to sojourn, he must abide a stranger on another man's ground. If poor, his children might become the slaves of Jews; though rich, he could purchase no Jew for a slave. In traffic, if he borrow of an Israelite, he must pay usury; but an Israelite will not pay usury to him, because he can borrow of his own brethren free. He must not set up his idol in the land. He must not labour on the Sabbath. He must not set the sacred laws at nought, nor blaspheme the God of Israel. Should he turn to worship Him, yet his access is only to the outer court of His temple; or should he altogether renounce heathenism, and receive the whole law, yet he can never acquire inheritance in a land every foot of which is pre-occupied; nor ever attain to the distinction, so definite, and so prized, down even to the days of Saul of Tarsus, to be held—"An Hebrew of the Hebrews." Small inducement, therefore, was presented to the men of any other blood to seek

a home in Canaan. But was there any stronger reason why the Hebrew should prefer a residence among the aliens? To have this, he must not only leave the peculiar blessings of his native land, but submit to their unrighteous laws, and endure their loathsome idolatries. He cannot enter their houses, for the walls are to him polluted. He cannot share their feasts, "for broth of abominable things is in their vessels." He cannot wear their garments, for his law enjoins him to wear openly upon his vesture certain ornaments, that mark him everywhere and always to be a son of Israel, a man of unaccommodating faith and offensive singularity, who is sworn to deny all names of Godhead, and to hate all shrines, all priests, all rites, all worshippers, save those only of Jehovah his own God.

If all these things rendered it impossible, so long as Israel did not neglect the law of Moses, that they should hold much intimate fellowship with the heathen, so as to be contaminated with their religion and morals (except those whom they sinfully failed to expel from Palestine), much more did the same things, and many more of a similar kind operate to knit them fast in the bonds of a most intimate brotherhood among themselves. One language, one lineage, national intermarriages, recorded genealogies, fixed family residences, fixed boundaries of tribes, the mutual relationship of all the tribes through one parent, and of several groups through both, the same sacred memories, the same holy law, the same centre of government, the same city of solemnities, with the same seasons of resort to it by all their males three several times in the year, the same spirit of prophecy, the same songs of Zion, one royal house, one anointed priesthood, one holy temple, one altar of sacrifice for all ! One God dwelling in the midst of them, and, from the mercy-seat between the cherubim, shining upon them with the light of His countenance, and guiding them by the voice of His holy oracles ! Was ever people bound in one body by such golden chains of unity as



these ? And when it is remembered, as we saw before, that the central power of all this attraction was the original promise embodied and figured forth until it should be fulfilled, in the holiest objects of their vision, and rites of their observance ; that this promise was the theme of their converse, their hymns, and their music, was symbolised in the very walls of their temple, their towers, their palaces, in the aspect of their fields, their vine-clad mountains and clear rivers ; nay, that they themselves, their great congregation, their family circles, their cheerful feasts, their gladsome processions, all, all proclaimed together that God would raise up for them an horn of salvation in the house of His servant David :—Can any scheme of national arrangement or national worship be even imagined more thoroughly calculated, in the circumstances of the time, to preserve incorrupt the hope of Israel, and, in them, of all the nations, or impress more deeply upon men's souls from generation to generation, that, though sin was still unexpiated, yet the day of expiation was hastening on, when the Son of Abraham should, by one offering, perfect for ever them that are sanctified ; and that, though to justify ourselves by our deeds of righteousness is impossible, yet they who called upon the name of this Lord should not be ashamed ! So much, briefly, for some faint exhibition of the bearing of the law upon the promise yet in prospect.

## LECTURE XXXVII.

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### THE LAW POSITIVE.

#### ITS BEARING UPON THE PROMISE.

IT was promised of God immediately after the Fall, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the Serpent; and by virtue of faith in this promise, while yet a matter of expectation only, the souls of men were saved from one generation to another during four thousand years. At length, the Word, who was in the beginning, and who was with God, and who was God, the same who in the beginning was with God—"The Word was made flesh," and in Him, according to the promise, the woman's seed appeared and finished His saving work; and, by virtue of faith in Him, the souls of men have ever since been saved, and shall be, as many as believe, so long as the world shall stand. The reign of grace on earth is thus divided into two periods, one preceding, the other following, our Lord's advent; and the Mosaic dispensation, while included within the former period, and terminating, when the latter period commenced, is yet of an intermediate nature betwixt both. It served as we saw in last lecture, to perfect as well as continue the patriarchal system of emblems embodying the promise which had BEEN of old, so as to give that system, in the hands of a people expressly set apart and incorporated for its preservation, a distinctness, fulness, and impressiveness of meaning, which it had not before attained—and it was fitted, as we must now endeavour to see,—fitted in an admirable manner, by its bearing upon the latter period, to secure first, and then to demonstrate, the fulfilment of the promise.

While it is of importance to note the difference between these two things, the *steps leading* to the accomplishment of the promise, and the *proofs* arising from them that it *has* been accomplished, it is not expedient, for our present purpose, to treat of them separately. The truth is, that all the chief events and chief arrangements which in their succession or continuity brought about the appearing of Christ after the manner in which He did actually appear, are also the very facts which, even by their separate import, but especially by their united and concentrated testimony, yield the conclusive evidence, that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is Christ, and no other but He. The usual process, both of fulfilment and proof, is this. Some important occurrence having express certain reference to seasons, places or persons, is first prophetically announced,—then, in the course of providence, it is exactly brought to pass,—then it is recorded by the pen of authentic history;—then, as in process of time, it proves to be but one in a long train of similar and connected events, so the train itself to which it belongs is found to be but one of many similar trains, all so related to each other that no single one of them reaches the goal of its several completion, until all are met in one Person, and that Person “the Lord’s Christ.” And thus, more especially within the boundary lines of the preparatory dispensation, all prophecy, all providence, all records, all reckonings of time, and demarcations of space, conspire both to prepare beforehand the way for the Saviour’s coming, and thereafter to make it evident that He is come.

All the different series of events now referred to, while culminating to the highest point of their range within the Mosaic economy, had, however, their beginnings, very distinctly, in the earliest times. It will serve to illustrate the unity of God’s plan of mercy, if, taking heed not to lose sight of the consummation, we start with each series at its very commencement.

Before proceeding to attempt this, however, one fundamental

fact must be carefully attended to:—The prophetic assurance, that there was to come a Saviour at all, and that He was to be the woman's seed; this, the common fountain of all religious dispensation and ordinance, was opened up in paradise; and it is very remarkable, that while there were yet but two human beings in existence, to one of them, and that not the principal person, was ascribed the peculiar parentage, to be realized in a supernatural sense, of the Divine Deliverer. In this manner began the first great series,—*that*, around which all the others were ranged, out of which they sprung, and in which they terminated, namely,—

I. The series of prophetic genealogy:—According to the very nature of human descent, the birth of any one individual whomsoever into this world, might be traced, had we knowledge sufficient for the purpose, through one single line of paternity, up to the very first patriarch of the race. In this respect, there is nothing distinctive in the lineage of our Lord. The peculiarity lies in the constant selection from the beginning downwards, accompanied with express designation and announcement—the selection of particular persons, in the succession of whose posterity from father to son, and only in that succession, the Christ should after long ages be born. Seth was thus manifestly set apart by promise. Noah, by implication at least, in the prediction that he only, and the children of his blood, should escape the deluge. When Ham had earned the curse for his son, and the words had passed from inspired lips, “Blessed be the Lord God of Shem,”—while, as for Japheth, though he was the first-born, the grant of dwelling in the tents of Shem, was the richest portion of his blessing,—it was made abundantly plain, that to Shem was assigned the first of human honours. Of him, accordingly, came Abraham, the next, so far as the Scripture records whose privilege was foretold. The rest we need hardly do more than name. Isaac and Jacob, Judah and

David, were the illustrious chiefs of the line in which, to the exclusion of all mankind besides, it was successively declared, that the Christ should be made flesh; and the words of God pronounced through all preceding ages were verified at last, when, in the family of Joseph, a man of the house and lineage of David, (Luke ii. 4.) Mary, his espoused wife, “a virgin, was with child, and brought forth a son and called his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, “God with us.” (Matt. i. 23.)

While this first series of a prophetic genealogy contributed a most essential element to the evidence of Christ’s birth, as well as conducted immediately to the event itself, other kindred and collateral dispositions were necessary to fence the sacred succession round about, lest it should be violently cut off; and age after age, to keep it full in view of competent observers and witnesses, lest its continuity should become questionable, or its hereditary dignity be forgotten. Of this nature, secondly, was—

II. The series of national distinctions and destinies.—Abraham, after his call and accession to the hope of Messiah as his offspring, speedily multiplied into a mighty nation. Prophecy revealed *this* beforehand, and it came to pass. In their very origin, separated under seal unto God, they were kept separate, as we lately saw, alike by human enmities and Divine interpositions. Trained to the observance of an institution given from above, and consisting alike of rigorous laws, evangelical though figurative ordinances, all calculated to set them at variance with the other nations—now without exception apostate,—and to keep them, at the same time, most intimately associated amongst themselves, they were constituted, after a manner previously unexampled, the guardians of the sacred seed itself, which dwelt amongst them, against foreign violence, and the preservers of all sacred traditions against universal oblivion. Something, no doubt, in some respects resembling this, but far less decided and

effectual, had existed in very ancient times. The children of Seth had separated from those of Cain. The posterity of Shem, it is probable, had continued to some extent obedient, whilst the rest of men revolted. But neither the forms of true religion, nor the dispensations of Divine Providence, were at all so expressly framed to perpetuate the separation or exalt the faithful people, as they were in the case of Israel; and so the limits were soon overpassed, and the evil rapidly swallowed up the good, until the hope of Messiah's coming, and the honours of His ancestry were on the very point of being equally forgotten. The seed of Jacob, on the contrary, besides the insuperable barriers of their law, were so compassed round, not only by the dreadful judgments of God, effecting their redemption from Egypt, and their establishment in Canaan, but also by the prosperous and victorious power with which, from that time forward, He rewarded their faithfulness, and the terrible vengeance with which He visited *their* sins as well as those of their adversaries, that even in spite of themselves, this people dwelt alone, as it had been written, and were not numbered among the nations. During the rule of their inspired judges, how did the very successes of their invaders, followed, as they uniformly were, by signal and marvellous deliverances, exalt their national renown among strangers, and turn their home thoughts to the recollection, study, and apprehension of the main reason why God so peculiarly protected them. The period when their religious characteristics were most distinctly marked, their promised territory most fully conquered and possessed, and their national power and greatness most largely developed,—in the days namely of David and Solomon,—was the period also when, after an interval of comparative silence, Prophecy began to proclaim afresh, with unprecedented fullness and clearness, the nativity of Christ, in the time appointed. Even when the nation began to separate and fall into decay, the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of a long suc-



cession of illustrious Seers, continued to give only the more celebrity and prominence to the glorious truth in which all nations were ultimately to have an equal interest; until at last, by virtue of their inseparable connexion with its fulfilment, it was gradually ascertained and acknowledged by all around them; their very calamities and dispersions only tended to make their privileges more marked, and their mission more effectual. By a long train of disasters, all clearly predicted, and all divinely chronicled, they became subject consecutively to the dominion of Babylon, Persia, Macedonia, and Rome, interweaving their history with the public memorials of the four great empires of the earth, and causing *these* to bear witness to the antiquity and sacredness of their nation before the whole world, to the close of time. The final destruction of their holy city and temple, the extirpation of their polity, the scattering of their race by the most renowned of nations and of potentates, under the full blaze of civilisation and knowledge, did nothing else than prove to all men that their work as a separate people was complete, so far as it belonged to the Mosaic age. According to the heavenly oracles, Christ had been born among them, had laboured, had suffered, had risen from the dead, had sent His messengers abroad among the whole progeny of Adam. All then that was merely preparatory to His coming, became, to that effect, useless, when He had actually come; and was therefore abolished, yet abolished conspicuously and memorably as was meet. But the people themselves remain as distinct and as peculiar as ever, testifying by their own Scriptures the sin of their unbelief, but proving also by these Scriptures and by their very condition that the Saviour whom they brought to others shall, ere long, become again their own.

III. Within the series of events affecting the honoured NATION, was enclosed, as it were and drawn out into length, the series of corresponding events distinguishing and qualifying

the honoured TRIBE. The Patriarch Jacob, when in vision distributing the blessing to his sons, thus addresses Judah:—"Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and to Him shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. xlix. 8, 11.) The prophetic announcement being given of Christ's birth in this tribe, all things are thenceforth so disposed as both to keep the tribe distinct, and to render it conspicuous. What the whole nation of Israel is to other nations, *that* the tribe of Judah is to Israel—the chosen guardian, the illustrious witness-bearer of the sacred line and seed. Accordingly, when God marshalled His armies in the wilderness, and divided the twelve secular tribes into four battalions, He stationed the tribe of Judah in the van, giving them the first place in the first division. He increased their numbers and their strength beyond any of the others. They were honoured, along with the other leading tribe of Ephraim, to send a faithful man among the twelve spies that reported of the Holy Land. They were eminent in the wars of Canaan. They received by much the largest and most defensible inheritance there. Royalty, originating in the neighbouring tribe of Benjamin, at once passed over to them, and rested with them. In their country rose the capital city of all Israel. In their immediate border, and under their protection, was permanently planted the national sanctuary and altar; and, in short, during the palmy days of their prosperity, they stood forth before the world as the foremost section of the foremost among the nations. As it happened, moreover, to the entire people of Israel, so it happened also to them; for, securing the ends to which they were set apart and devoted, their very disasters rendered them the more effective instruments. When the ten tribes, first rent from their dominion, were afterwards swept away from the land,

Judah, with the small tribe of Benjamin and a part of Levi, became themselves all but the sole depositaries of the law and the promise. To follow the steps of their captivity into the kingdoms and courts of Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Artaxerxes, or to trace their subsequent liberation and re-establishment in their old possessions, would merely be to re-tread the ground already surveyed, when we sketched the history of Israel, almost forgetting that, long before reaching this stage, it had merged into the history of Judah only. So stood the case at the coming of our Lord, and so it continues at this day. We now know an Israelite no otherwise than as a Jew, a son of Judah. Thus early did two of our series meet.

IV. But just as within the national series, we find that of the tribe of Judah, so, within the series of the tribe of Judah, we find that of the chosen family. *They* were distinguished amid the tribe, as the tribe was amid the whole people. They had their peculiar honours, their historical personages, from the earliest period to the latest that required their occurrence. It is true the prophetic designation of their house to the honour of giving birth to the Lord, did not take place, at least not very distinctly, until the days of David the king; but when at length vouchsafed, it shed its lustre upwards, along the line of descent, as well as downward, manifesting, as soon as it became necessary, the connexion of David with Judah, and, consequently, that of Judah with Christ. We now see another and a far higher glory shed upon the head of Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, than that of being named prince of the tribe of Judah in the wilderness, and presenting before all others his princely offerings to the tabernacle. We perceive why it is recorded that Phares was born of the Canaanitish Tamar—that Salmon married Rahab of Jericho—and Boaz married Ruth, the Moabitess. It corresponds with the remarkable fact that the royal line of David himself was, by the express appointment of

God, continued through the person of Solomon, the son of the Hittite, Bathsheba;—neither the sins of His people nor their alliances with the heathen, being suffered to prevent the fulfilment of God's merciful counsel in the appearing of His Son. The remaining history of the lineage is soon told, so far as it serves to identify the Lord. Its continuance invariably upon the throne of Judah, while the dynasties of the ten tribes were continually changing—its providential deliverance from extirpation at the hands of Queen Athaliah, when but one royal scion from the root of Jesse remained—its advancement to honour in the captivity above all the subject kings that did homage at the court of Babylon—its signal recovery of power and comparative liberty in the person of Zerubbabel, prince of the restored captivity, all matters of specific prediction and exact history, served to keep its successions in the broad sunshine of observation, until it became necessary that it should descend into that condition of humble obscurity in which it behoved Jesus to be born. The season of this concealment, however, was so short as to allow of preserving entire and unquestioned the genealogies afterwards transcribed into the writings of the evangelists.

We cannot at present overtake the details that would be necessary to illustrate the effect of a FIFTH series—that of prophetic and historical circumstances affecting the sacred localities—or a SIXTH, having reference to the chronology of our Saviour's birth, nurture, and sufferings. They terminate, however, as a little research will easily enable you to see, the one at Bethlehem of Judah, Nazareth of Galilee, and the city, temple, and environs of Jerusalem; the other, exactly at the period when calculating, probably, by the weeks of Daniel, Herod, and his elders, were able to perceive that the set time of his nativity was arrived, and when, indeed, the expectation of it, as we learn from even a heathen authority, had pervaded the east.

It is also impossible, on the present occasion, to show

at large how, SEVENTHLY, the PROPHEPIC series, linking the Mosaic with the Christian dispensation, in the person of John the Baptist, pointed out to Israel, and to mankind, the very Lamb of God Himself, who taketh away the sins of the world; and then reaching its own perfection in Him, terminated on earth in the first succession after the apostles of His ministers under the Gospel.

An EIGHTH series ripened into the office of His royalty, a NINTH into that of His priesthood and sacrifice, by such significant incidents as the question of Pilate with the answer—"Art thou the King of the Jews?"—and the unconscious preaching of the High Priest, when he said—"Ye know nothing at all, nor consider, that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not, (John xi. 50.); and His own triumphant exclamation at the close of His sufferings,—“It is finished.” All these nine distinct lines of predictions and events, and designations, are capable of being separately traced, from an early commencement to their actual concurrence in the life and offices, and death of our Lord; and, though prevented by circumstances from entering farther into them now, as, indeed, from our previous inquiries, it is hardly necessary, we have gained something, if it has been made to appear generally, that the whole organization and history of the Israelitish people under the law, were designed to bring Immanuel into the world with preparation suitable to the importance of His mission; and with demonstration such as none but Divine wisdom and sovereignty alone can give, that JESUS OF NAZARETH IS INDEED THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.

## LECTURE XXXVIII.

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### THE LAW MORAL,

#### ITS NATURE AND USES.

HAVING dwelt so long on the topics most essential to the right understanding of Positive Law, at its first institution in Paradise, and during its extension throughout the Patriarchal and Mosaic Dispensations, it might now seem natural for us to complete the survey, by inquiring what aspect it assumes in the ordinances of the Gospel age, especially the sacraments. But these will come more advantageously before us in their connexion with the system of evangelic worship generally; and enough, besides, has been already said of them to show that they form a part, and a very harmonious and beautiful part, of Positive Law, as it also is a system. Let us now turn, in humble reliance upon the Divine blessing, to consider the nature and uses of the *Moral Law*.

And here it cannot but occur at once to you, that, in order to exhibit the true spirit and office of all positive precepts, it was absolutely necessary to anticipate and to state at some length, and sometimes even more than once, several of the most important and fundamental truths relating to the *Moral Code*, which it will therefore be sufficient now to recapitulate in their order. Such are the following :—

I. The whole matter and essence of holy law, both as to its rules and as to its authority, lies in the WILL of God only—His will as arising out of the infinite and absolute perfections of His



glorious nature, existing of itself, unoriginated and unchangeable. His will is the law of all His own actings, not only because there is no one that can withstand it, but because, if it could be overruled, there were no other law fit for Supreme Excellence to follow. This law determined from the beginning what faculties and what condition He should assign to His rational creation, seeing it moved Him to create. It determined equally by what transcendent maxims of righteousness and loving-kindness His own dominion over them should be guided, alike throughout the inscrutable mysteries, and the revealed intents or visible movements of His providence. It determined signally what ends of existence they ought to pursue; what views, affections, and purposes they ought to cherish; and by what rules of action they ought to walk. In all this range of His boundless volition, nothing is defective, nothing is superfluous, nothing is disjointed, nothing is perverted, nothing is ineffective, nothing is mutable. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." And that portion of His universal will that is specially directed to regulate the heart and life of His earthly creature man, so far as man's duty rests upon the unchangeable facts of his nature and condition, and upon the relations, consequently unchangeable, which arise from these betwixt him and an unchangeable God—this portion of the Divine will is our supreme and everlasting rule of action—that which, in contradistinction to all temporary or variable precepts, even though they be Divine, we denominate the *Moral Law*.

II. It is not only in its rule, but also in its sanctions, that this law results from the permanent relations of God with man spontaneously and irreversibly. Its rewards and punishments are as natural as its precepts, and as abiding. To turn from it so much as in one point, which is to turn from its whole authority, and whole spirit, and whole design, is immediately, and

*ipso facto*, to turn against all that God is, or God does, or God commands. It is to bring a soul created for harmony with all things, into discord and conflict with all things Divine, or of Divine workmanship, and this cannot be but misery and death. But preserve that soul pure, retain it in the place, employ it in the functions, animate it with desire of the ends for which it was fashioned and endowed from the beginning, and whether amid the works of God, or whether above all in the bosom of God Himself, it floats on a sea of continual delights. It lives vividly, it lives for ever. To have the condition of either the sinful or the righteous spirit, while it continues such, converted into its opposite, would be of all imaginable things the most unnatural, because it would involve change in the nature of God, an infinite impossibility; and a change, too, from good to evil, an infinite abomination so much as to think of. For if the wicked is to be made happy by his wickedness,—must not this be wrought by the Divine Omnipotence, put forth expressly to bless and to beatify the abuse made of His own gifts to the thwarting of His will, the dishonouring of His name, and the subverting of His sovereignty? And a failure on the part of faultless holiness, to make its possessor joyful, would be still more inconceivable, since it could proceed from nothing but a direct exercise of Almighty power to curse, disgrace, and desolate its own most beauteous and most precious workmanship, while employed according to His own mandate in working His pleasure and in showing forth His praises. Just as unnatural as such a change in the actings of God would be, so unnatural must be also the inversion of either the rewards or the penalties of the moral law.

But if the rewards of righteousness are made sure, may not the punishments of iniquity—so the guilty conscience murmurs—may not these be remitted, at least, through the annihilation of the transgressor? A sufficient answer is found in the opposite

questions—Is it worthy of Jehovah's greatness that, by a single act of resistance, His own creature should oblige Him to uncreate? Is it not possible, nay, is it not evident, that there are purposes of incalculable value, both for the manifestation of His glory, and for the security and establishment of His obedient subjects, which none but the vessels of wrath, made such by their sin, are fitted to subserve, and even they only by their eternal punishment?

III. Whatever may have been the case among other orders of spiritual beings, and before the angels fell, at least in the family of Adam, and after revolt and enmity in heaven had once distempered the world, it was consistent with the most absolute strictness of the moral law, that under covenant one man should stand towards it as the representative and sponsor of many, whether in order to preserve all holy, by a single but perpetual and standing token of homage to its authority,—which was the case before the fall,—or whether, as after the fall, to recover as many as God should choose from guilt and corruption, by an amount of penal suffering adequate to the full desert of all their iniquities together, joined with a course of pure and holy obedience paramount to the whole sum of that collective service which they were bound, but had failed, to render. The law could never be abrogated, never changed, either in command or recompense, because the law was nothing else than the will of the living God. But the law would never have been violated had the first Adam stood faithful; and the law, though now broken, can still accept of reparation, and can yet attain its highest scope, through the voluntary subjection, and mighty fulfilments of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven.

IV. Under the covenant of grace, the powers and qualifications of the Mediator are altogether singular and unexampled. Their fitness and their greatness combined are without parallel. A child of Adam, in every respect a true man, He was able,

when made under the law, to render the very obedience, to undergo the very punishments, to reap the very rewards, in their highest possible perfection, which the moral law,—or, in other words, the will of God determining what were righteous or wicked in man, and what should be his consequent destiny for weal or woe,—which this law, the will of God, had commanded, or promised, or denounced. The Son of God, again, and as such, counting it not robbery to be equal with God,—Jehovah tabernacled in flesh,—He lifted up the works and experiences of His humanity high above the level and category of all that a mere creature can perform or undergo, and gave them a place and significance, a weight and a value, and a potency, by infinite degrees removed beyond the possible acts, or sorrows, or joys, of the loftiest and holiest of created beings. He brought a Divine-human sufficiency, and that is a sufficiency at once of exact suitableness, and of infinite power, to magnify the law, and to make it honourable.

V. By the grace, by the wisdom, by the power of God, this mighty agent was qualified and ordained to satisfy supreme justice for sinners under the law. “Thus saith God the Lord, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein; I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people. Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have set my Spirit upon Him. He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.” So speaks the Father concerning the Son. And what, on the other side, is the answer? (Isa. xlii.; Ps. xl. 6.) “Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire: Mine ears Thou hast opened; burnt-offering and sin-offering Thou hast not re-

quired; but a body hast Thou prepared for Me." (Heb. x. 5.) "Then said I, Lo! I come, in the Volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." These are the words of the Son addressed to His Father. Here is the counsel of peace between them both, (Zech. vi. 13,) the covenant between God and God: the compact of infinite truth and faithfulness with truth and faithfulness infinite; which, accordingly, was perfectly fulfilled in the Son's obedience, and in the Father's acceptance. "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." (John xvii. 4) "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him." (Matt. xvii. 5.)

All these things show very plainly that the Son of God was to save men from the consequences of their sins, by fully satisfying the demands of that law of which their sins were the violation. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law until all be fulfilled" (Matt. v. 17). If, therefore, we seek to be justified by faith without the deeds of the law, do we make void the law through faith? God forbid. Yea we establish the law, inasmuch as it is Christ's performance of it in every point—an obedience so much more excellent than our own, to which we look as our sole title to righteousness or life.

VI. Finally, then, in the sixth place, when "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4, 5)—when He did this, the means employed were found adequate, in their *actual use and effect*, to *accomplish all the ends of mercy in the redeemed, without trenching on the claims of justice*; to satisfy the honour and fulfil the intents of the law

without executing upon the people of Christ the wrath denounced by it against sinners.

And here allow me for once to quote a statement made from the pulpit five-and-twenty years ago, for the purpose, at the same time, of pursuing our subject, and of showing at least by one instance, how the ordinary and received truth of the Gospel, once discovered and embraced, retains its hold upon the minds of men, as a solid and satisfying ground of hope and spiritual comfort. "Can one whose sins have merited eternal death," I asked, "be put in possession of everlasting life—placed on the same level of glory and happiness with the angels that never sinned, and yet no iniquity be committed? He may, through the death of the Son of God. The cross renders intelligible and plain a procedure of Jehovah, that without it must for ever have remained unaccountable.

"That we may clearly discern the truth of this assertion, let us recollect that the awful retributions of God against sin, according to the law, proceed not in any the least degree from such feelings as in man assume the sinful form of mere personal revenge and resentment. They have three great ends in view. *First*, they fulfil what is required to satisfy the rectitude and holiness of the Divine nature. God can as soon cease to be, as he can cease to oppose himself with power and efficacy to *sin*, which is but just another name for malice, iniquity, and falsehood. *Secondly*, these retributions, taken in connexion with the rest of His dispensations, display the character of God to His creatures in its true colours. His nature and perfections cannot change; and He will make Himself known to be what He is; nor will He suffer His offspring to be misled by false and groundless notions of that Great Being whose they are, and whom they must resemble, in order to find their happiness. And, *thirdly*, they powerfully oppose the spread and increase of sin, by holding out an awful example to that part of God's creation that has not yet



fallen ; and by urging fallen man, while his day of mercy lasts, to flee from the wrath to come, and to hasten to that refuge which will secure him from sinning as well as from suffering. When the penal justice of God, as expressed by the law, has effected these three ends, it may seem, as far as concerns our knowledge or well-being, to have accomplished all at which it aims, and to be fully satisfied.

“ Were mercy extended to sinners at once, and without some such atonement or satisfaction to the law as could show that God is holy while He is merciful, all these three ends would fail. The perfections of God would not then act, and put themselves forth according to their true nature. The character of God would be misrepresented in His work, and therefore mistaken by His creatures ; and free scope would be given to the diffusion of all error, hatred, and unrighteousness, which, by a natural and necessary consequence, would destroy the order and blast the happiness of creation wherever they made their way. Thus the ends of justice would be defeated, nor would those of mercy be accomplished ; but the universe would fall into confusion, and sink entire into the gulf of misery and ruin. How consoling to the heart of feeble man is the assurance that there is a God above whose glorious attributes are an eternal barrier against the outbreak of such an immeasurable calamity.

“ But in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, as a propitiation for our sins, all these ends are completely secured, while the actual transgressor who believes in Jesus is entirely liberated from punishment. By the sins of the world guilt was contracted to an unknown extent. The son of God, becoming man, took upon Himself the guilt of His people, He suffered the just for the unjust, He bore our sins in His own body upon the tree. What was the extent of Christ’s sufferings, God has not revealed to us,—indeed, it would have been impossible for us to conceive. They were certainly far more sharp and terrible than any mere

man could have borne for one moment. But of this we are sure, and it is enough, that "God laid upon Him the iniquity of us all," not lightly or inadequately, but in such a way, that taking into account the Divine dignity of His person, the sinless purity of His nature, the faultless perfection of His obedience, and whatever else gave value to His sufferings, the holy displeasure of God against sin was as fully put forth and as thoroughly exerted in what He endured, as it would have been in the final punishment of those countless multitudes who shall be saved. So much for the first end of justice.

"As to the second, namely, the true display of the Divine purity and holiness, this seems not merely as well, but far better accomplished in the sufferings of Christ than in the death of the sinner. By destroying the transgressor, not from selfish enmity, but out of pure regard to truth and equity, God would certainly have manifested His love of holiness; but when desirous to save the ungodly He afflicts His well-beloved Son, in whom His soul delighted, rather than let His act of mercy bring His uprightness into suspicion, surely, then, He places His love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity in a far more glorious and affecting light.

"Once more, with respect to the last end of justice, the restraining of sin, who does not perceive that, with a view to the attainment of this object, the death of Christ is by far the most effectual and powerful means that has ever yet been displayed to the world. If the terrors of God restrain from sin, where do these appear written in characters of fire if not in the sorrows of Gethsemane, and in the agonies of the cross? If God did not spare His own Son, but afflicted Him to the death while bearing the sins of others,—shall the obstinate rebel find his punishment light and tolerable when he comes at last to bear his own sins?—Or is it the mercy and love of God that are to

gain us over from our hostility to His will and service, then, oh ! where are these written in sunbeams and glory, if not in the voluntary death of our Great Mediator ? This is the grand inducement to holiness of heart and life ; for, while judgments and threatenings fail to change our disposition and give a new direction to our will, the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then are all dead, and that He died that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again." (2 Cor. v. 14.).

The suffering obedience of Christ under the law was the subject exclusively of these remarks. But that His active righteousnesses are of power to effect the same end, needs no farther evidence than the mere statement presents. Is there any exercise of the Divine perfections more grateful to the Father, than the holy, and marvellous, and life-giving achievements of His Son ? Is there in the whole world anything more gloriously expressive of His own true character ? or anything, finally, more instructive to His creatures in the *nature* of true righteousness, or more animating to its *performance* ? For the attainment of all these purposes, most worthy of Divine intention and pursuits, there are in heaven or on earth no means to compare with Christ's fruitful labours, except His expiatory sufferings, and none to compare with His fearful sufferings, except His wondrous labours.—Upon the whole, therefore, the substitution of the Lord as Head and Surety for His people, under the eternal law of righteousness, did vindicate the sovereignty of that law, did magnify its excellency ; and, while leaving unbelievers, where they stood before, the subjects of its heavier doom and punishment, did gloriously secure, even in the view of our limited conceptions, its noblest and most glorious ends—adding to those already mentioned this blessed object more, namely, the righte-

ous conferring upon Christ Himself of a blessedness unprecedented and unparalleled—for what created thing except His manhood is set on the right hand of the throne of God? and in their union with Him, the righteous bestowing upon His people of a fellowship in His royalty, an entrance into His joy, and a sure portion in His inheritance, who is for ever the Heir and the Owner of all things. Amen.

## LECTURE XXXIX.

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### THE LAW MORAL.

THE statements of last lecture regarding the Moral Law may be summed up in three leading particulars. It is that branch of God's immutable will, which determines the whole duty of His creature man. The demands of its righteousness, whether before or after the fall, did not exclude, but, under the sovereign appointment of God, admitted the suretiship of one on behalf of many. And, in particular, the Mediatorship of Christ, perfect in its human adaptation, and infinite in its Divine sufficiency, did actually accomplish, both in doing and suffering, all the ends of God's justice and goodness in the commandment—giving full scope to the exercise of His attributes towards humanity, whether as condemned or justified—manifesting to all creation His true character, as loving righteousness and hating iniquity—and presenting to every intelligent spirit in existence the most effectual motives possible for conforming to His will. In short, so far as the mind and will of God is expressed in giving law to man, and really constitutes the whole of man's law, it finds complete fulfilment, both of precept and sanction, in Christ, and in Christ only. In the wicked it executes punishment, but finds no obedience. In the redeemed its rewards take effect, but in spite of much disobedience. In Christ, the obedience, the merited rewards, the vicarious punishments, all meet. In every respect, "He is the end of the law for righteousness."

On which side soever we turn, the law finds in Him its consummation and its rest. Still its bearings upon mankind at large are of the highest importance; and to these we shall, with the help of God, direct our attention, after considering first, what naturally takes precedence, the manner of its publication among men.

It is not, however, so much the external circumstances of any particular revelation that come in this form to be contemplated, as the fulness of the revelation itself, and the thorough and penetrating efficiency of the means by which it is made to take possession of men's souls. Can anything be imagined more perfectly fitted to secure the object than that, first,—

I. Every man who has no other means of knowing the law, is a law unto himself. (Rom. ii. 14.) The structure of his own nature is a witness to him of his Maker's will, and teaches him authoritatively, what to follow and what to shun. He cannot think, without perceiving, that, as regards his actions, while some things, no doubt, are indifferent, many other things are by no means so, but bear unequivocal and indelible characters of moral right or wrong. He cannot allow the emotions of his heart to expand themselves upon the natural objects of desire or aversion, hope or fear, without often finding their exercise accompanied with either a joyful feeling of approval, or a withering sense of shame and condemnation, proceeding from his inmost self; the dictate of a faculty that claims an absolute right to rule him, and has its claim allowed. Or, if its sovereignty is called in question, it points to the power unseen and omnipotent as the certain avenger of its wrongs. No doubt the range of its judgments may in many cases be very limited; still it demands, that, wherever pronounced, they shall be respected. It is possible, also, for its sensibility to be blunted, or for its equity to be wilfully corrupted. But it fails not under this treatment both to suffer grievously and to inflict suffering. Nor does it easily



forget, but witnesses ever after, that it has been criminally disabled from the right performance of its functions; and that, therefore, if it leaves the offender thenceforth in quietness, it is only that in due time he may be overtaken by destruction without warning. But, on the other side, it is capable of great enlargement in wisdom, great improvement in tenderness, and great confirmation and advancement in authority, so that its decisions reflect, as in a mirror, the very judgments of God, and evince the infallible certainty of their execution. The happy possessor of a conscience like this, stands *penetrated* and possessed as it were by the will, that is, by the law of his Creator, and through the influences of that Spirit which has taught him, not only discriminates and distinguishes, but feels and wills and acts by it, as being at once the will of God and his own.

Had man stood in his uprightness, and been safe from the numberless temptations which the disorders of sin have produced, there had been no need of any other revelation of the moral law than this. But, amid the decay of his intellectual powers, the alienation of his heart from God, and the violent inducements to evil with which his actual condition abounds, conscience, to do its office effectually at all, stands in need of instruction from without; and, accordingly, in the second place,

II. The law has been given by God in writing. The extent to which it is by this means communicated to man, beyond what would be possible otherwise, whether we look to the numbers instructed, or to the amount of knowledge in each, is not easily calculated. But it is a method altogether adapted to our nature and our condition. Language, the usual vehicle of our thoughts, is here employed. The law within us, already described, has furnished it abundantly not only with the phraseology of intellect and sentiment in general, but very specially and expressly with that of moral distinctions and obligations and retributions. Wherever the powers of speech are exercised, from the very

heights of human culture and refinement down to the lowest, or almost the lowest, grades of stupidity and barbarism, the dialects of all nations supply not more richly the terms and formulas of narrative, statements, arguments, passion, purpose, than those of right and wrong, obligation and freedom, duty and licence, accusation and judgment, condemnation and acquittal, reward and punishment. The will of God, therefore, conveyed in words, finds access under the healing influence of His Spirit, to the deepest recesses of the human bosom, clothing itself in utterances which have become inseparably associated with the most secret and vital movements of man's moral nature;—it proves “quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb. iv. 12.) Being written, too, it is rescued from all the inaccuracies and uncertainties of tradition, which must soon have perverted its import, and antiquated its authority, and remains upon evidence universally received as sufficient for establishing the most important interests and rights of men, an abiding standard of duty, as incorrupt, and as imperative, after a thousand transcriptions, by a thousand generations, as at the first hour when it was dictated by the Spirit, or graven by the finger of God.

No less admirably has the knowledge of the law been propagated and insured, in the third place, by the subject matter which has been selected for its enactments.

III. The law regulates inward principles rather than outward details. The effect of this in enabling the simplest and most ordinary minds both to acquire and to convey a very enlightened and comprehensive view of the Divine commandment, passes all reckoning. The great principles of our nature are few and familiar, by his own experience, to every man; the incidents and relations of our outward condition are innumerable,

and incessantly changing, yet require, under every considerable variation, a fresh adjustment of our conduct. Teach a man how to rule his own spirit, and he will easily learn how to regulate his actions. The heart once set right, and kept right, by the Divine will, finds of itself the right way, through the crowd and stir of the world; whereas, if the instruction were directed, without this inward clue, to provide a fresh precept for the wayfarer, determining his course at every new turn and angle of the shifting labyrinth, the labour of learning the rules of life, would be to all men an impossible task. The only portion of Divine law that proceeded upon this plan was the positive. Even when most expanded, as it was in the ceremonial and civil law of Moses, it spread but a little way, and yet was pronounced a heavy yoke. But when pursued beyond the limits of inspired wisdom, as in the minute and countless regulations of the Rabbinical system, or in the politico-religious institutions of the Koran, it becomes like the common and statute law of our own country, the business of a lifetime for the mightiest minds to master it, while ordinary men abandon the attempt in despair. If the law of God were made known by no readier method, what must become of the myriads, young as well as old, weak as well as wise, whose comfort and safety depend upon observing it. But, as it is, how obvious to all eyes is the fact, that of those who truly fear God, the plainest and the most simple, often more than the learned and subtile, are instructed to follow stedfastly the true path of holiness, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Tit. ii. 12.)

Even when speaking of the Divine Law as regulating inward principles, assuming that they are several, we do its simplicity but imperfect justice. The strict and precise truth is that it lays its injunctions directly upon but one principle, when it binds up all righteousness in the one precept, "Thou shalt love." Love,

as addressed to the source of all authority, to the Supreme Law-giver, is the grand moving power of all well-doing; as its opposite, enmity to Him, is the fountain and sum of all iniquity. When, therefore, the real origin and ground of love has been discovered to any man, when its true character has been disclosed, when its right of supremacy has been manifested, its proper objects made known, its native workings described and directed, then the law of universal righteousness is already revealed to that man. More especially let love be shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him, and immediately it becomes itself the best teacher of both its own offices and its own obligations. At once it lifts up its chief homage to God in heaven, and extends its regards to men on the earth for His sake. Towards God it inspires reverence and trust, desire and gratitude, humble submission, prompt and cheerful service; toward men it instils the lessons of truth and justice, kindness and goodness, forbearance and long-suffering, gentleness, and forgiveness, and mercy. By the aids of but very easy and practicable instructions from without, the understanding of him, who feels within him this living impulse, discovers very soon not only those main rules and exercises of duty, but the special forms and modifications of them which varying circumstances continually require,—while the urgent pressure which enjoins their observance,—the gladness of heart which accompanies the vigorous discharge,—the mortification, and grief, and fear which pursue the neglect of them, demonstrate better than a thousand teachers that to walk in them is to obey the will of God, and to forsake them is to withstand it. So reasonable is their exercise, that even where the animating principle is wanting, the understanding may easily be convinced of their obligation; and conscience gives feeling proof of their necessity, in the pangs which it inflicts for their absence.

At the same time that the immense advantage in teaching is secured by instilling and regulating the principle rather than

prescribing the forms; yet, because our nature is weak and wayward, and the current even of genuine love, if left wholly to find its own course, might stray into regions of irreclaimable barrenness, or stagnate amid obstructions, or be idly dissipated and lost, therefore the wise Lawgiver has Himself, in the fourth place, authoritatively determined and opened up its principal channels.

IV. The whole law is expressed in a few brief and comprehensive precepts. The "Ten Words," as the Scripture strikingly calls them, embrace the entire duty of man, both to God and to His creatures, and yet a little child can recite them. The love of our hearts, pre-eminently due to God, yet having many lawful attachments to created things, is liable to fall short in its devotedness to Him, and cleave unduly to the dust. He, therefore, claims a peculiar, a Divine interest in it for Himself, which He forbids to everything else. With this the Decalogue begins, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me;" and with this it ends, "Thou shalt not covet," for that is not only injustice to thy neighbour—it is a denying of God—it is *idolatry*.—Next, because the sentiments of devotion, if wholly left to find expression for themselves, would deviate into foolish, or superstitious, or burdensome ceremonials, God, in the department of His worship, has prohibited the use of all human inventions, and limited the exercises of reverence, and desire, and thankfulness, to a small number of pure and simple ordinances of His own appointment.—Amid the multitude of familiar words and things that suggest the being and presence of God, how prone are we to forget His own awful Majesty, and to transfer the unconcern or levity with which we regard the mere symbols, to that unapproachable and inviolable sacredness which they represent. He, therefore, warns us, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."—And then, once more, the ceaseless tide of this world's business, if broken by no check, would wholly engross

the time and thoughts of men. If many, or even all, should, notwithstanding, succeed in reserving, each for himself, some moments of undisturbed leisure for the drawing near to God, yet for a multitude of men so to adjust the calls of care and labour upon each, that all should enjoy their season of quiet at the same moment, and so be able to assemble themselves statedly together for the purpose of social worship,—this would be found impossible; therefore the Lord has commanded, “Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.” How few and short are these statutes of the first table; yet how sufficiently do they determine and protect the sole appropriation, the just expression, the universal solemnity, and the constant offering of our love and services to God, in the case both of individuals and of worshipping assemblies.

In guarding round the great central principle of love to God, it is evident that each of these four commandments selects a chief instance of the kind of encroachment against which its barrier is planted; and through exclusion of that, by parity of reason, excludes the whole kind, and establishes its moral opposite. The same effectual device is employed to abbreviate the terms, and expand the application of the precepts of the sacred table. Here, as in the former case, love is the heart and life of the entire code. “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. xiii. 10). But the fifth commandment brings the principle to bear upon the interests and relations at large of social life. “Honour thy father and thy mother” is a call that goes direct to the fountain of our earliest affections, and touches their most instinctive sense of obligation. There we find the habit formed of listening reverently to our first instructors; and that teaches and begets a similar regard to all others whose office or natural right it is to indoctrinate and train us in whatever department of truth or duty. There we recur to the first authority that guided, and controlled, and pro-



tected us in the spirit of love, where we could not have ruled ourselves; and that conducts, as obedient children and subjects, to whatever other powers we may find appointed of God to govern society for the common benefit. There the recollections revive how we were first led by the hand to the footstool of mercy, and taught with hand, and knee, and voice, to make our supplication to the Highest; and this remembrance brings us dutifully to the halls of instruction, and to the house of prayer, and binds our ear to holy discipline. In process of time, if placed ourselves in the higher relations, and advanced to the places of honour and authority, remembering what the benefits were which originally won us to subjection, and constituted a felt and acknowledged claim on our deference and obedience, we are taught also,—but indeed we must have learnt it long before,—that the obligations of all social bonds are reciprocal, that love has its proper work to do alike towards the superior, the inferior, and the equal, and that the higher place only imposes the higher duty. And why mention in detail the other precepts of the second rank? After the same manner, each is, in its own field, a germ of budding and fructifying knowledge. The instance which it specifies, by a most natural and facile process of reflection, draws after it everything of the same class or description that to the spirit of Christian charity can prove an object either of requirement or prohibition. As the leading precept of the order secures the well-being of society as a whole, so every several one that follows protects some precious possession of the individual—nay, without confusion or interference, they interlace and corroborate each other, like the stones of an arch, lending support throughout to each other; until all the dearest interests of man, his life and health and comfort, the sacredness of his domestic ties, the wealth of his possessions, the odour of his good name, are protected by combined and complicated defences from invasion. Nay, even the evil eye of lawless desire is for-

bidden to rest upon them, and that by the self-same mandate that forbids their being put instead of God. Taking all these facts together, and viewing the commandments in all their extent, what vast concerns are here contained in little space. And where, in all the range of human legislation or philosophy is there a thousandth part of such knowledge disclosed in so few and such simple words. "Open mine eyes, O Lord, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law."

## LECTURE XL.

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### THE LAW MORAL.

WHEN speaking of the communication to man of the will of God, so far as it constitutes His law, we must distinguish between that degree of imparted knowledge which merely informs the understanding, so as to oblige the conscience, even of the unregenerate; and that, which besides accomplishing this object, takes possession of the heart, so as to regulate the entire life of godly men. And, again, in accordance with this distinction, when estimating the means and methods employed by God for *teaching* the law, we form but a very inadequate conception of their sufficiency by attending only to their fitness for conveying speculative and convictive knowledge:—the power which, in the hands of the Holy Ghost, they possess, of so bringing the Divine will to bear upon believers, as to transform them into the Divine image—this, though not the whole, is manifestly the chiefest branch of their excellence.

In both respects, the medium of instruction, which far transcends all others, is Christ, made of a woman, made under the law. His glorious obedience is that which presents the commandment at once in its clearest light, and with its fullest impression. He is not more the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe, than He is the end of the law for knowledge and sanctification to them that are justified. He that hath seen Him, hath seen the Father, not only in the attributes of

His nature, but in the enactments and issues of His legislative will. As the Mediatorial obedience of our Lord is characterized by a peculiarity, a perfection, a nearness and acceptance with God, which are altogether Divine,—and which, therefore, give unrivalled *authority* and *weight* to His example ;—so that example possesses a clearness, a comprehensiveness, a variety, an aptitude and pointedness of home application, which leave no man at a loss how to follow it, who has once been brought under its commanding power. In truth, whatever within or without us has been constituted of God an instrument of moral illumination or impulse is gloriously instanced and brought to bear upon us here. Are we required to mark and implicitly obey the dictates of a conscience enlightened by the Holy Spirit, lest our heart condemn us, in token of His judgment who is greater than our heart? Then here is a conscience guided and strengthened by the same Spirit, of which the mandates are so perfectly fulfilled, that the sanctity of in-dwelling Godhead itself harmonises with the accomplishment and approves it. Are we taught to aim at the attainment of all righteousness in the strength and just exercise of one great inward principle—the love of God and man? Then here we have that principle developed through a life of the most diversified and most momentous action with infallible precision and with invincible power and perseverance.—Or if we regard, again, the *external aids* by which the law is otherwise made known to us, we find them all combined and concentrated to assist our apprehension of the law as embodied in this example. Was the will of God declared in written language, the language of inspiration? Then the Spirit of all wisdom, selecting out of the countless words and deeds of Christ those main instances, themselves a multitude, which were necessary and suitable and sufficient, to place in the clearest light and bring out in the strongest relief a faultless and lovely image of moral rectitude,—recorded them with unerring exactness in the Gospel, that there, with open

face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we might be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) Was the same will of God comprehended in the few brief, clear precepts of the decalogue? All the works and ways of Jesus are reducible to the observance of these, and are but their fulfilment. All prophetic comments, all the sound learning of uninspired books and preachers, contribute their share to the illustration of the Lord's history, as they derive all their glory from it. All other examples of the Scripture, and all the lives of saintly men, however presented to our thoughts, conspire to aid our conceptions of the true Spirit and import of this unequalled life. The very wickedness of the wicked, by its dark contrast, enhances to our view the purity of this light. In presence of it, we inspect our own bosoms, and perceive how beautiful is holiness; how deformed and revolting is sin.

Passing, however, from these general and indirect considerations, let us address our thoughts to the great moral spectacle itself of our Saviour's life. Not that we can attempt so large a task as presenting a mere outline of the whole would prove to be; but, by the selection of a few characteristic and instructive peculiarities, it may be possible to show how,—besides its reference to the ordinary circumstances and obligations of men,—there is no condition of theirs so unusual, no relation so singular, no duty so arduous, but some conjuncture, some procedure in the history of our Lord will be found, which, in their endeavours to obey the will of God, shall inform the conscience and strengthen the heart of him who is most in danger of being misled or overcome.

By way of introduction to this view of our Saviour's life, rather than as an illustration of it, let us first advert to

I. The faultless innocency and fulness of His obedience. The service of Christ transgressed no bounds,—it admitted no

defects. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" was His challenge to His enemies (John viii. 46), and it was never answered. They abounded in reproaches and accusations, but they furnished no proofs. Following at this day the simple and candid narratives of the Evangelists, we find incident recorded after incident, and temptation after temptation. But the conduct of the Divine Messenger is spotless throughout. The more it is considered the more it shines. All that He says or does is just what it ought to be. There is no error of judgment, there is no obliquity of purpose, there is no infirmity of temper, there is even no stumbling through unwatchfulness, no sinning by surprise. His soul is ever conformed to the claims of both heavenly sanctity and earthly goodness. His graces prevail against everything; nothing takes effect against them. Our souls, when filled with the contemplation of Him, unconsciously adopt the title given Him by His apostle, "the Holy one and the Just" (Acts iii. 14); and our lips, ere we are aware, exclaim with His forerunner, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John i. 29).

The fulness of His righteousness is as wonderful as its faultlessness. Wherever He is called to act, His virtues occupy the whole field that pertains to them. There is no requirement of strict duty omitted, there is no office of large and generous goodwill but is performed. His works of piety and love move on in a full and equable current. He never flags through remissness or self-indulgence. The toil and burden of His necessary occupations and conflicts are very great, yet he is never weary in well doing. The terror of His final enterprise is extreme, but He faints not nor is discouraged until He has set judgment in the earth (Isa. xlii. 4). Surveying His life as a whole, we find in it every excellence without any defects. No virtue can be named, however despised by the world, which it does not exemplify; and no favourite wickedness, however specious, which it does not condemn. What a previous knowledge of His person would have led us to expect in it, that we find. It is God acting out



the entire will of His holiness through the faculties of a man, and in the likeness of sinful flesh.

II. The sphere in which the Son of God was called to act, and the office which He had undertaken to discharge, furnished opportunity for the exercise of every Divine grace and spiritual virtue, in the highest degree. The head and representative of humanity at large, He bore all the great relations of manhood, in all their breadth and depth, to God, to his fellow-men, and to the world in which He dwelt. His manner of life is filled with contrasts and extremes, not by leaving void the middle space that lies between them, but by covering the whole territory of human duty and performance, from side to side. Hence its sufficiency as an exhibition of the whole law. Not only is it free from trespass or defect wherever it reaches, but it reaches everywhere. This fact let us endeavour to consider under a few leading particulars, such as may indicate, at least, though they can explain but to a very small extent the general truth.

1. Christ dwelt betwixt the extremes of riches and poverty. He was destitute of everything, yet the world was His own. How many of the excellencies and vices of men, in a wide range of their moral obligations, are suspended upon their relation to the means of earthly existence and comfort. How different in visible execution, though identical in spirit, are the duties of the affluent and the indigent! But so advantageously, for the ends of instruction, was our Lord's condition placed, that His example supplies a rule for them, and for all others, to walk by. Born to no inheritance, He provided the means of subsistence, during His privacy, by the labour of His hands. Doubtless, there was truth as well as contempt in the question of the Nazarenes,—“Is not this the carpenter?” (Mark vi. 3.) Throughout His public life, dependent daily for food and raiment upon the contributions of His disciples, He distrusted not God,—He complained not of the humiliation,—He neither restrained the freedom of counsel and reproof towards those who

sustained Him :—" Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but Mary hath chosen the better part;" (Luke x. 41), nor dissembled His right to be so supported and honoured :—" Why trouble ye the woman?" He said of her that had poured on His feet the precious ointment,—" for she hath wrought a good work on me." Out of the product of such casual resources, He purchased necessities, as for instance the provisions for His journey at Samaria, (John iv. 8,) and on all fit occasions gave assistance to the poor. (John xiii. 29.) In the desert places, while feeding hungry thousands by the word of His mouth, He still enjoins His disciples, " Gather up the fragments, that nothing may be lost;" (John vi. 12,) and rebukes the worldly selfishness of those who sought Him, " not because they saw the miracles, but because they did eat of the loaves, and were filled. (v. 26.) Himself subsisting on alms, He upholds by His doctrine the revenues of princes. Lord of the temple, and Himself the life of all its services, He yet calls treasure from the depth of the sea that the sacred tribute may not be left unpaid by Himself and his disciple. (Matt. xvii. 27.)

2. Christ dwelt betwixt extremes, and yet held an ordinary place also, in the relationships of life. If in anything it could seem that the condition of our Lord were unsuitable to the purposes of instruction in righteousness, it would be with regard to the relationships of blood. Yet even here, upon most careful consideration, it will be found that the language and import of His conduct is sufficient.—" Honour thy father and thy mother is the first commandment with promise:" (Eph. vi. 2.) at twelve years of age, while the Lord must be about His Heavenly Father's business in the temple, He still pays dutiful respect to His earthly parents—He goes down with them, and comes to Nazareth, and is subject unto them. (Luke ii. 49—51.) By this conduct, as by many other acts, He puts the seal of His approbation upon marriage, that being the only tie that binds Him in filial relationship to Joseph. The feeling of human tenderness

to His mother, though never suffered to dictate His public procedure, or interfere with the functions of His office (John ii. 4; Matt. xii. 48), continues through the whole course of His life, and breaks out with wonderful pathos at the close of it. "When Jesus, on the cross, saw His mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her to his own house." (John xix. 26, 27.) Here we behold the bonds of personal friendship invited to twine themselves with those of kindred. Brotherhood is also signally honoured. In the College of Apostles, Peter and Andrew were brethren; so were James and John. The other James, the son of Alphaeus, was near kinsman to the Lord Himself. In the wider relations of life, His heart is open to all the right feelings and important duties of companionship and social intercourse. He commands the services, both civil and sacred, of those who are officially subject to Him. He renders obedience, in His state of humiliation, to those who were officially set over Him; submitting His Spirit even to the judgment of Caiaphas, and yielding His body to the sword of Tiberius Cæsar. Amid His voluntary abasement beneath the power of others, there is however no surrender of His own unrivalled grandeur. In the presence of the Roman Governor, He declares Himself a King; and in the presence of the Sanhedrim that sat in Moses' seat, He asserts His highest dignity by the announcement, "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man, sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Luke xxii. 69.)

NOTE.—The remainder of this Lecture consists only of a few remarks upon a *third* particular, viz., that Christ lived in the world between the extremes of love and hatred. But the sketch given is so brief, that we deem it unnecessary to introduce it.

## LECTURE XLI.

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### THE LAW MORAL.

IN order to form some conception of the manner in which the Moral Law is revealed by the obedience to it of our Lord Jesus Christ, we endeavoured to contemplate Him as He stood related to the world in the three leading particulars of its wealth, its dignities, its affections. We found that in each of these respects He dwelt between extremes, was more rich and more poor, more exalted and more abased, more beloved and more hated, than any man; yet, that He touched the extremes by filling up the whole middle space, there holding converse with mediocrity; so that His spirit and actions, filling the whole channel of human life, and sweeping the whole field of human duty, exemplify the law in its application to all that is familiar, or but moderately removed from that character; while they, more especially exhibit its requirements and teach its genuine operation, upon the heights and in the depths of all that is arduous and extraordinary. It was, of course, mainly the duties of the second table to which our remarks directly referred; and even of these only a very few scattered instances could possibly be produced, suggesting inquiry without pretending to satisfy it. A similar course we must now follow with regard to the duties of the first table. The holy love of our Saviour to His Heavenly Father is a mine of inexhaustible riches. It were doing somewhat could we but point out the direction in which the principal veins

accessible to us may be found. The whole would furnish contemplation and discourse for a lifetime, and when our days were spent, by far the greater part of the treasure would remain undiscovered.

To show that such expressions are not hyperbolic but sober and exact, it is sufficient to ask ourselves for a moment, what manner of love to God it was, that prompted a Divine person voluntarily to relinquish the throne of heaven and take upon Him the form of a servant, (Phil. ii. 6.); freely to assume the responsibilities of a countless multitude of sinful beings under the law which they had violated, (Isaiah liii. 6.); actually to endure their just penalty as well as supply their lack of service, (Gal. iii. 13. Rom. x. 4.); and by these means at once throw open the flood-gates of the love of God to man, which sin had fast closed, and yet, in the sight of all His creation, establish upon new and immutable foundations the authority and awfulness of His holy throne. These are the objects and services of a Divine love, of which we can see just enough to know that they are past knowledge. If His obedience as a man occupied the whole region of human agency, His obedience as God fills the boundless immensity of the Divine counsels and operations.

In one department only, that, however, in which our conceptions are most at home, let us, with humility and prayerfulness, survey from several points of view, the workings of the love of Christ towards the Father, precisely as they hold out to us the most instructive and encouraging example. The department in question, you will easily judge, refers to His vicarious sufferings. These, while embracing, without question, an amount of passive endurance, of literal distress and anguish beyond our reckoning, admitted at the same time the element of active energy, of strenuous purpose and struggling exertion, under the impulse of love, to an extent probably far greater than the toils and efforts of His ordinary ministry, unequalled as they were, re-

quired. Yet our current forms of speech, founded on our own narrow experience, cause us very much to overlook this truth. Very many of our sufferings, though not all, are wholly involuntary, and nowise dependent upon our immediate conduct. As it was not obedience that produced them, so neither can sinning relieve them. To this class we are apt unconsciously to refer the sufferings of Christ. But all His afflictions, on the contrary, were of His freest will. He encountered every one of them, and suffered it out, because in love He chose to do so. He is like a martyr, promised his life at every stage of the torture, if he will only deny the faith; but giving eye after eye, and joint after joint, and bone after bone, to the executioners,—at last giving his vitals to the flame, in order to complete his testimony. There is no labour of teaching, or travail, or controversy, requiring an exercise of the mind, in all its faculties, or in some respects of even the body, at all so powerful and so exhausting, as that which bore the Son of God through the agony so truly described as the travail of His soul. (Is. liii. 11.) Efforts without pain, or accompanied even with pleasure, may no doubt be both strong and fatiguing, but certainly none can either *task* or *consume* our strength, like those which wrestle against extreme difficulty under the burden of extreme sorrow. Let us therefore bear in mind, that in looking on the passion of Christ, we are beholding His intensest action, surveying His mightiest labour of love, and especially as that love was primarily and supremely directed to the Father.

To know any thing with certainty on such a subject at all, we must begin with collecting and comparing some notable testimonies of Scripture. After learning the tenor of them, we shall be in a favourable position to consider, 1st, The nature of the Lord's sufferings; and, 2d, The amount of them;—keeping in view, under both particulars, those respects in which they are not only an expression of His own filial love to God, but a reve-



lation of the law as to its demands upon our obedience, and an example of righteousness intended for us to follow.

“There is one God,” says the Apostle (1 Tim. ii. 5), “and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” “Now he hath obtained a more excellent ministry than Aaron, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant which was established upon better promises” (Heb. viii. 6). “And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the sins which were under the first covenant, they which are called might obtain the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb. ix. 15). “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. v. 21). “Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Peter iii. 18). “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. ii. 6). “Though He were a son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered” (Heb. v. 8). “Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted. . . . He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou

shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days. . . . I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong ; because He hath poured out His soul unto death : and He was numbered with the transgressors ; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. liii. *passim*). Almost any one of these texts might furnish ground enough for our present reflections, but it is the mass and accumulation of them that best assure our thoughts both of the nature of the Lord's sufferings and of their amount, that we may thus discern the quality of His obedience.

1. First, then, it is evident that His acceptance of the Mediatorship placed Him, as to the responsibilities of sin, in the very room and place of sinners. Personally, He continued ever the Holy One and the Just ; but officially He was made sin for us. He stood before God, in Himself a beloved Son ; but as the representative of rebels and transgressors, accounted a transgressor,—who must be punished ere He can be restored. Leaving the throne of co-equal dignity and concurring operation with the Father's sovereignty, He now occupied a position which, but for the community of foregoing counsel, and justice, and mercy between these Divine persons, would have been antagonism. On one side behold the Father, sitting in judgment, a Sovereign injured and incensed, yet placable, and desirous of showing favour, if only His just prerogative can be vindicated. On the other side behold the Son, laden with iniquities not His own, undergoing, in flesh, the sentence of indispensable justice, an offending, suffering, repenting vassal. O ! what a strange application of the law is here ! What an unexampled position for human nature to occupy ! What a sublime and transcendent exercise of love to God ! What zealous, what arduous obedience ! What height of devotedness from out of the depth of woe ! For to apprehend, if in any degree possible, the painfulness of this

service, let us consider a little more in detail the spiritual distresses involved in the situation just described.

Whereas before, the Lord had stood ever unimpeached, now he is accounted guilty of all sin. Who that has long enjoyed the delights of innocence, but feels his heart sink, and endures a deadly pang, when crime is first laid to his charge? No doubt, if he is consciously guilty, which the Lord was not, there is the more despondency and sorrow in the accusation. But yet human nature is such, that though a man's own heart acquits him of all offence, still the solemn, earnest imputation to him, especially by wise and good men, of evil deeds performed by others, is felt as a heavy affliction. Even of Christ himself, it is recorded by Paul, as it was foretold by the Psalmist, that it grieved His spirit, when "the reproaches of them that reproached God had fallen upon Him." All the charges, of whatever kind, brought against Him by men were false and groundless. He was free of them in conscience, and free in His Father's sight; yet it is expressly with regard to these that He complains in the 69th Psalm (v. 20),—"Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness." Shall we then suppose, that, when the Father Himself imputed sin to Him,—all sin,—sin the most vile, the most various, the most aggravated,—the sin of His own people, His kindred, those who were owned by Him as mother, and sister, and brother, earnestly imputed it, fast bound it to His soul, so that He could no way escape from it but by enduring its full punishment,—shall we suppose, that then, the trouble of His spirit was small? It will not suffice to say that He felt Himself personally faultless, that He knew the guilt was but legally imposed. That, indeed, saved Him from despondency; that ultimately brought Him relief. But it did not prevent Him from profoundly experiencing the humiliation, the shame, the horror, of being accounted of God a transgressor, and if a transgressor at all, of necessity the greatest of trans-

gressors. What else but this can be meant by the language of the 40th Psalm, when the same Person who has said, "Lo! I come; in the Volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God," begins presently to bemoan Himself thus, (v. 12,) "Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore, my heart faileth me."

Nearly allied to the imputation of sin by the Father is the judgment passed by the Father against the sin imputed, and taking effect in the soul of Him to whom the guilt attached. To the holy Saviour what was so lovely as holiness? What was to Him so precious as that approbation of God, which by nature belonged to His spiritual perfection and purity? In His ear there was no voice so joyful as the utterance of the Father from heaven,—“In Thee I am well pleased.” (Luke iii. 22.) Then, surely, to have this complacency turned away, and, instead of it, to have all His people’s iniquity numbered against Him,—to have its deformity exhibited,—to have its atrocity proclaimed,—and all, as centering in Himself, to hear the thunders of doom, and with answering abhorrence of sin, to doom himself; surely this was very, very terrible. We need not farther enlarge on topics of this class. If even the imputation and judicial condemnation of men’s sins were attended in Him with indescribable sorrows, what must have been the exchange of His Father’s wrath for that love of His Father, in which was all His delight? And how must the avenging strokes be felt of that right hand of power on which alone He was wont to lean for support and victory?

II. After such reflections upon the nature of Christ’s suffering obedience, it is scarcely necessary to add that its amount must have been very great. Here, however, we cannot safely trust to human reasonings, which have carried even good men

to questionable extremes. On one hand, some have held that the penal sufferings of the Lord were actually as great as the sum of all the punishments of all the elect would have been, if, instead of being saved, they had been actually cast into hell. On the other hand, it has been affirmed that the number of the redeemed, whether greater or less, could make no difference to the Lord on the cross, inasmuch as a death sufficient to atone for the sin of one soul, would be sufficient to satisfy Divine justice for the sins of all mankind. The Romish Doctors have even taught, that one drop of Christ's blood had been enough to wash away the guilt of the whole world. Let us rather be content to hold, that as the Father certainly inflicted no gratuitous or unnecessary pains on His beloved Son, so the afflictions of a Surety, whose person was Divine, though He suffered only in the flesh, could not possibly fail of their design, by falling short in either greatness or value. As to their actual extent, the Scripture is our only authority. In declaring that "His visage was marred more than any man's, and His form more than the sons of men" (Isa. lii. 14), the Prophet informs us their intensity went beyond all other human experience, and therefore far beyond our powers of apprehension; a statement with which the Gospel history entirely accords (John xii. 27; Matt. xxvi. 37, 38; Mark xiv. 33; Luke xxii. 44). When this impressive fact, therefore, is combined with what we were able to see before of their peculiar nature, which inverted as it were the ordinary course of penal inflictions, making Holiness itself embrace of choice the treatment at God's hands which is due to wickedness; and in proportion as the perfections, moral and spiritual, of the Sufferer increase, rendering by that very means His agony the more intense and exquisite; we cannot, I think, but become sensible that the exercise by Christ of love to God, in this branch of His obedience, passes all praise of men or angels, and can be estimated only by the Father Himself. It

is, however, by this very means the higher exhibition of the majesty of heaven's law; and presents to us by example the surer lesson, that as there is no sacrifice which we must not be willing to make rather than disobey the Lawgiver, so there is no exertion to which He calls us, that He will not enable us to achieve, and from which we shall not reap an infallible reward.

We have thus endeavoured, not, I trust, without some fruit, to contemplate the foundations of the moral law, deeply laid in the very nature of God, in the image of Himself which He has impressed upon *our* nature, and in the frame of that whole universe in which we serve, while He reigns for ever. We have endeavoured to lift up our eyes to the spiritual perfection of this law as fitted to regulate the character and life of man, prohibiting whatever is evil, and presenting whatever is good, through all the height and depth and length and breadth of his thoughts, affections, and actions. We have found its rule and its sanctions alike to be immutable and imperishable. We have been called to admire the completeness and certainty of its revelation, not only as presenting clear principles rather than minute regulations, and bringing those principles distinctly to bear upon all the great lines of duty to God or man, so as to be easily derivable to the minuter branches and to individual cases; but also, as writing the whole upon our own consciences within, and more wonderful than all the rest, exhibiting before our eyes the perfect and transcendent fulfilment of the whole, upon the field of actual exertion and endurance, in the obedience unto death of God in flesh! To what more suitable conclusion, then, can we bring our studies at present, than that of accepting this law with purpose of heart, and putting ourselves fully and fervently under its authority, that we may both learn and practise more than ever heretofore all the precious lessons which it offers to us all, whether as sinful men, as disciples of Christ, or as persons conversant in different ways, and at dif-



ferent stages, with the learning, the graces and duties, the prospects and privileges of the sacred ministry. "Not every one," said Jesus, when teaching His followers to distinguish between man and man (Matt. vii. 21), "not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven." And when, at the close of His personal converse in the midst of them, he had most strikingly set before them, by word and deed, some of the most important and most difficult duties pertaining to their own future conduct in the apostleship—"If ye know these things," he added emphatically, "happy are ye if ye do them." (John xiii. 17.)

Then let it be solemnly impressed upon every one of us, that we cannot possibly escape the application of this law to ourselves. It will reach us—it will work its proper effects upon us according to the manner in which it is received by us—it will finally dispose of us for weal or for woe. Interwoven with our frame, we can no more flee from it than we can flee from ourselves. Placed before our eyes in the Scripture—sounding weekly in our ears from the pulpit—discussed in conversation—illustrated daily to our observation alike by men's deeds of conformity and of disobedience, it gradually extends its testimony and its authority in our consciences, until, like a two-edged sword, "it has pierced to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow," and established itself as the touchstone of our inmost principles and judgments,—“a discernor of the thoughts and intents of our hearts.” Thence it operates upon all our works and ways without, to regulate or to resist, to approve or to condemn them—each as it occurs, that they may be recorded one by one in the books of all memory, and characterised according to truth, in the sight of God, and before the eyes of our fellow creatures and of ourselves. There, in the great day of the Lord, they will be distinctly read, no

circumstance obliterated, no quality misrepresented. God's remembrance waxes not faint or uncertain. He can revive in every soul its own history, and that of others, as freshly as during the hour of action itself.—If in the imagination of the drowning mariner,—when lying motionless and insensible, but again recovered so as to tell his strange experience,—the whole series of his passed life, coloured with the hues of wrong and right, rose vividly to view, beginning with the recollection of his last struggles in the water, and travelling thence to the scenes of home, and family, and upwards in a reversed order even to the incidents of his childish days, all as distinct and sure to his apprehension as when the events were happening, yet combined with the feeling that he was now a dead man, past the boundaries of earthly existence, never to return—if this is so, how much more when God awakes to judgment, that He may give to every man according to his deeds, not only in the eyes of bystanders, angelic or human, but in the sure perception and consciousness of the soul itself that is judged!—How much more shall He place that soul in the midst, as it were, of his former thoughts and ways throughout the days of his vain life, which he passed as a shadow, calling up every act, with its causes and bearings, and objects, and testing it by the forms and measures of the holy law of love, in order to determine, according to righteousness, what its recompense should be. Then each of us shall feel the true application of this law to our character and doings from first to last, as it shines in our consciences from the glory of *His* countenance, who once divinely fulfilled its righteousness, and now conclusively executes its awards—"Well done, good and faithful servant! Thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matt. xxv. 21.) "But unto the wicked He shall say, These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but

I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thine eyes.” (Ps. l. 16, 21.) Then He casts them down into destruction. “How are they brought into desolation in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when Thou awakest, Thou shalt despise their image.”

## SERMON I.\*

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MATT. xviii. 19, 20.

“ Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

AMONG the many causes which render the instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ less striking to worldly men, while they fill His people with the liveliest sense of His wisdom, is the perfect simplicity and unstudied ease with which He constantly addresses His disciples upon the most profound and most important subjects. When we look at the style and manner of His communications merely, He is like the prudent master of a family conversing calmly with his children and domestics about the most familiar business of life; but when we come to consider what is the meaning, and what the design, of that discourse which we hear flowing forth with so much facility and composure, we often find that it perfectly expresses the profoundest counsels and ways of the Almighty, and teaches the means by which the soul of man, escaping from the bondage of corruption, may pass its earthly pilgrimage in safety, to find refuge at last in the heights of glory. This remark applies pre-eminently to the sayings of the text. An eye, familiar now with the written language of the Saviour, as the ears of His disciples once were with the utterance of His lips, is arrested here by no premeditated pomp of words, and excited by no artificial loftiness

\* Evidently preached after the dispensation of the Lord's Supper.

of style—that great, that invaluable truths, are about to be disclosed. No; it is just the carpenter’s son of Nazareth, plainly instructing His fishermen, and, through them, delivering His Gospel plainly to the poor of every age. But when we begin to examine what He has spoken, it is indeed the Gospel,—glad tidings of great joy, announcing the tender mercies of God from heaven, and capable, when understood and trusted in, of elevating our souls to that land of bliss. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name;”—would not the full explication of this simple phrase,—“gathered together in my name,” well nigh comprehend the whole mystery of the Church’s salvation? —“There am I in the midst of them;”—does not this plain expression, as it stands here connected, set forth the whole presence and power of Christ’s Mediatorship?—“Whatsoever ye shall ask on earth, it shall be done for you of my Father which is in heaven;”—here, does He not comprise and ratify the whole united promises of God, that largely secure to His children every benefit which they can have need of, for time or for eternity? And when he connects their enjoyment of these benefits with their “agreeing to ask,” though it were but “two or three of them together,” does he not, in fact, point out to every family, to every society, to every assembly of His people, through every land, and through every age, and consequently to us, even to us, here met for His worship, an easy, sure, and immediate access to all the richest treasures, and all the dearest privileges of His kingdom?

That we may not lose the advantage which His gracious providence, by this present occasion, affords us for obtaining from our heavenly Father the gifts which we most desire, let us briefly advert to the import of these several expressions, in their order:—

I. First of all, let us remember how much is meant by being “gathered together in His name.” *Whose name, my brethren?*

That of Christ. And what does His name set forth? His person first, Immanuel, God with us—the Son of God, but also the son of man—the Almighty, but bringing all the fulness of His Godhead to dwell in flesh. His office next—Christ, the one anointed Mediator betwixt God and man, except by whom no one cometh to the Father, but through whom, whosoever cometh shall in no wise be cast out. Lastly, His work—Jesus, who saves His people from their sins,—saves them by virtue of His humiliation from the right hand of glory, down to the shame and agony of the cross, where, as their responsible surety, He drank out the cup of wrath which their trespasses had mingled; and saves them by the power of His exaltation,—sending His Spirit from heaven to renew their souls in the love of God,—addressing His Providence to their defence and growth in righteousness,—reviving their very ashes at the resurrection of the just, and blessing them with all His riches in glory, through an eternity beyond. Here, indeed, is an appellation of high significance! A name that is above every name. But who are benefited by its publication? None but those who understand, and who with the heart believe the truth which this name exhibits, so as to have not only their sins forgiven, but also their character and course of life transformed by its power. All these, though scattered over distant lands, or dispersed through many ages,—nay, though severed even by the gulf that lies between this world of sorrows and the paradise of bliss, are yet “gathered together in this name.” They are the General Assembly of the Church of the First Born,—the one family of God on earth and in heaven. The barriers of time, of place, of condition, which seem to disunite them, how imposing soever they may appear, are in reality things far less considerable and less effectual than the bonds which constitute their union; for they have all one God, one Saviour, one Head, and one membership, one imperishable life, one holy law, one fountain of spiritual joy



and consolation, one prospect of ever-during felicity. It is true, those of them who sojourn on earth are prevented—not more by the obstacles of seas and mountains, and by the distinctions of nation and language, than by their own minor differences of conception and opinion on religious subjects,—from coalescing visibly into one spiritual society; but still, they cease not to be one body, whilst they hold of one head; and still, even those lesser associations among them, which are formed for the maintenance of a Scriptural ministry, which adhere to the written truths and ordinances of God, and which edify themselves by the exercise of a spiritual discipline, and of a social worship, are, notwithstanding their seeming separation from one another, yet really united, each in itself, by a Christian bond; so that, to the individuals who compose every one of them apart, the expression of the text will truly apply that “they are gathered together in the name of Jesus.” The promise also, therefore, holds good, and “There is He in the midst of them.” But whilst this promise is undoubtedly to be understood as thus referring to such comprehensive and permanent societies of believers, and likewise to the whole body of the Church, would it not be overstretching the largeness of its terms, and interpreting its bountiful grant with too lavish an allowance, were we to bring down its application to every occasional meeting of two or three Christians for spiritual ends; and were we to allege that its faithfulness could by no means be maintained unless the gracious presence of the Lord were actually multiplied to every place, and extended through every hour, at which His followers religiously assemble themselves, from the moment when the words were first uttered down to the very consummation of all things? Such an interpretation may, indeed, if we enter minutely into its details, appear to speak of things almost too marvellous to be believed. Yet it only states the sober truth. It is just unfolding what is wrapt up in the brevity of the recorded expression—

“*Where* two or three are gathered together.” Does not this refer alike to any place, and to every place? And as for time, did not His omitting all mention of it distinctly imply, that *no* time, be it when it might, should ever interfere with the fulfilment of His Word?—thus anticipating the assurance to His disciples which He afterwards gave expressly, “Behold I am with you *always*, even unto the end of the world.” All times, therefore, and all places are alike accessible to the sure blessings of this promise, provided only that then and there His people are really “gathered together in His name.” But when men are met face to face, and seated side by side in the same spot, surely they *are* “gathered together;” and when they have come in simple obedience to the command of Christ as their Divine Lord by faith in His Gospel,—to worship the Father through Him, and to learn His holy will more perfectly, that they may both do and teach it,—then, surely, they are “gathered together *in His name*.” Nay, these are the very choicest moments of their spiritual fellowship. These are the very closest conjunctures of their indissoluble union. What is true of them at all times, is at these times emphatically true, that “they are gathered together in the name of Christ;” and the bonds by which they are conjoined and constituted into more permanent societies have no more appropriate use than just to create the opportunities, and to ensure the stated returns, and to promote the fullest improvement of these occasional assemblies. When, therefore, the followers of our Lord are present *the most* with one another,—when they are so *the most* for His love and honour, and so would feel His presence to be *the most* seasonable,—shall not he also then *the most* “be in the midst of them?” His promised favours are not so loosely appended to the arrangements of His Providence, or so vaguely applied to the commanded services of His Church, that they may superabound where less necessary, less suitable, less useful, but shrink like

failing waters where they are most eminently needed, and will be most naturally expected, and would, if granted, be most fruitfully improved? No, surely. Much rather is that unbounded love, of which His promises are the expression, guided in all its operations by an omniscient and infallible wisdom, which, having first dictated the very promise itself, continues to adjust its blessings still to the peculiar need of every rising occasion, and furnishing less, it may be, where less will be sufficient, grants more where more will be profitable, and opens without reserve all the flood-gates of beneficence, where the wants are most of all importunate, and the results will be of all most excellent and glorious. If this be the manner of His gracious dispensation, which unquestionably it is, then Christians, whensoever they feel the pressure of any want, and are able, so much as by reasonable inference to bring home to their case any one of the promises, may confidently expect an appropriate and a sufficient supply; but they ought, with tenfold assurance, to reckon upon the largest communication of every suitable gift, on those occasions especially, which, like our religious assemblies, fall under the direct scope, and most pointed significance, of His promise, and are most expressly and immediately designed for the advancement of His glory, and the salvation of their souls. Who, then, has joined this present concourse in true submission to the precept of His Lord? Who amongst us believes unfeignedly in the atoning death and quickening resurrection of the Great Immanuel? Who now desires, with heart and soul, to call upon the Almighty Father, in the strength of this only Mediator? Who longs to be more enlightened in the knowledge, and more animated with the love of Him, in order to serve Him hereafter with a more judicious and more fervent spirit, in the blessed hope of seeing His salvation? To you, holy brethren, as many are thus minded, although you were in number but two or three,—and the Searcher of Hearts, we trust, is witness that

you are many times as many,—to you apply at the present hour the words of this description, that “ye are gathered together in the name of Christ,” and it follows, with a Divine and infallible certainty, that “here is He in the midst of you.”

II. When the testimony of holy writ has brought home to the assured knowledge and present sense of Christian men, a fact of such magnitude as this, it certainly becomes them well to consider, as we would now do, in the second place, what that fact embraces, and in what it terminates. Is Christ indeed in the midst of us? Then, how is He present? and to what end?—As for the human nature with which our Lord was born, and in which He suffered, we know that it is exalted, in one person with His Godhead, to the right hand of power, so as not to be present in the assemblies of His people on earth.—Yet in our ignorance of the region where *His* Majesty resides, and of the powers that may belong to glorified Humanity, it were too presumptuous in us to conclude, that He does not now witness our demeanour even with His bodily eyes, and hear our sayings even with the ears of His flesh.—That His human spirit is with us, in the fulness of knowledge, of lively sympathy, and of gracious will, is matter beyond doubt. For if—according to the Scriptures, our unerring guide in these mysteries—that Saviour, who became flesh, was from the beginning God, “the Maker of all things”—and if, according to the same Scripture, that Comforter who is emphatically called the Spirit of Christ, is God also, uncreated and supreme, then these two Divine Persons, not less than the Almighty Father Himself, are in every place eternally present, not only by their sacred essence, but with all the riches of infinite wisdom, might, and love—and, consequently, they are even so now present here. They comprehend,—they penetrate our very being, and they appreciate our thoughts, feelings, wishes, wants, with a most thorough sensibility and discernment. But with the self-same excellencies in

which they are now present with us, are they not also present with the holy Soul of Jesus, wheresoever His celestial residence may be removed or may be fixed? Their knowledge of our present state and circumstances, whether we conceive of that knowledge as here, or conceive of it as in Paradise,—is it not that one undivided and unvarying knowledge, which belongs equally to their incomprehensible Being—wheresoever it extends itself to overspread and to penetrate unbounded space? If, therefore, the Holy Spirit, while Jesus of Nazareth still sojourned with infirmity, was able not only to acquaint Him, as we read, with all earthly things, even the darkest secrets of men's hearts, but also to instruct Him with all sufficiency in heavenly things, even the deep things of God—shall not that same Spirit now much more, when Jesus dwells with open face in the midst of His Father's glory, be able to inform Him instantly and absolutely, and by a vivid insight and intuition, of all that passes on earth in the congregations of His worshippers? Let not any Christian admit the fear, that no soul of man, not even that of Immanuel, can be equal to the multiplicity, the urgency, and the difficulty of those concerns, which, from the numberless assemblages of His people, must thus be laying incessant claim to His regard. For, shall not the Godhead of Immanuel, which “upholdeth all things,” as Paul bears witness, uphold transcendently His own humanity? Supporting, as He does, without fail, the fainting helplessness of His redeemed on earth, shall He not mightily strengthen Himself, their Redeemer, in heaven?—While yet “a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people,” nevertheless, He was strong enough to “bear our sins in His body on the tree.”—And when the dispensations of Heaven towards our world shall be wound up, on the great day He will be found strong enough in every exalted attribute as “*the Man whom God hath chosen*,” to pronounce universal judgment and to award eternal re-

tributions. How, then, should He prove unequal to the performance of those ministrations, (on the one hand far less painful, on the other far less vast and accumulated,) which go to advance from day to day the welfare of His servants, when they seek to approach His Father's throne by the medium of His human as well as Divine intercessions? Surely the strength, which was and will be equal to these greater works, will be more than sufficient for the less; and so the Sacred Oracles declare. They announce their Lord Jesus as being risen from the dead, and therefore, inclusively, of His human nature, "as able to save to the very uttermost those that come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them:"—and they testify that "we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmity," but one who "himself hath suffered, being tempted, and hence is able to succour them that are tempted."—Here is language, of which it would clearly be a most unwarrantable and arbitrary limitation to say that it does not speak of aids available always and everywhere; but merely mentions a sympathy that feels for us at certain seasons not specified, and a power that can help us in certain places not defined.—Such a comment would leave us no sure foundation of hope at any time or in any place, but would utterly nullify the comfort and security which Christ designed to give, not only to His Apostle, but to His people by the promise, "My grace is found sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in thy weakness?" Assurances like these, which abound in the Scriptures, could never be fulfilled, unless at all times and places there were maintained betwixt the human no less than the Divine Spirit of our Lord, and the souls of His people, a communication as certain,—an intercourse as real,—a fellowship as entire and as effectual,—as if His glorified body were actually present before their eyes, and as if He spoke to them with the same audible voice that said of old to His Apostles in their alarm, "It is I; be not



afraid!"—The veil, therefore, O true worshippers, which hides the Person of your Saviour from your sight, and the distance that separates, perhaps, the habitation of His throne from the spot where you have assembled—are absolutely no hindrances at all to that most intimate acquaintance with all your thoughts, or that most earnest participation in all your interests and concerns, which constitute in truth the best, perhaps the only presence of Spirit with spirit. The imaginations of the thoughts of your heart are, even now, most clearly apprehended in the sacred contemplations of that Son of Man, in whom resides the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

All the holy affections and emotions of your souls, whether they lean to joy or sorrow, are met at this hour, in the heart of your Redeemer, with corresponding sentiments, the most genuine and sincere, that rise in warmth and tenderness far above the feelings of yours that occasioned them, and blend themselves in perfect harmony with the unchanging love, and infinite compassion of His Godhead. And if there now exists within you any holy desire which His word has suggested, any right intention or purpose which His Spirit has inspired, any strong determination resting upon the assurance of His help, that you will deny yourselves to all sin, "and that living you will live unto the Lord, or dying will die unto the Lord;" then, doubt not that the self-same desire and purpose, and strong determination concerning you in the breast of your Saviour, which was indeed the first cause of its existence in your own, is now awake and active, in answer to the movements of your spirits, urging on the highest accomplishment of all your desires, in the fervour of that sovereign and invincible will of His Godhead, "which speaks and it is done, which commandeth and it stands fast." Out of the fulness of a heart thus informed, thus animated, and thus impelled, which is most intimately present with *you*, because you are most thoroughly apprehended and embraced

in *it*, does your great High Priest, the Son of God and of man, intercede for you without fail, in the heavenly sanctuary, providing now on your behalf, as on that of all other believers, whensoever gathered together in His name, "that if any two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it *shall* be done for them of His Father which is in heaven."

III. We cannot enter at present into so vast a field as the inquiry—what those things are, in their largest extent, which believers may ask, with assurance from the words before us that they shall receive them. To arrive at the practical use of the truths we have been contemplating, it is sufficient to observe on this point, that persons met for prayer in the name of Christ, and asking through the faith of Him, can ask for *those things only which God has promised* to His people; but that, on the other side, those things only are omitted in the promise, which would either encumber us as being useless, or injure us as being positively hurtful; whilst there is included not only the amplest sufficiency, but the richest abundance of all that is truly desirable for man, whether as a stranger and a pilgrim on earth, or as an heir of celestial glory. Yet, in regard to some even of the most precious of these gifts, the time, the manner, and the measure in which they may best be bestowed, are points which, in many cases, can be but ill-determined by human wisdom, and ought therefore to be referred, amid the most earnest desires and urgent supplications of the petitioner, to God's unerring disposal. Within these necessary and beneficial limits, however, the success of believing prayer, according to the words of our text, is infallibly secure.

IV. No single suppliant ever called in faith for promised blessings at the hand of God, and called in vain. But when our Saviour gives a special and emphatic promise to social prayer, declaring that where two or three are met together for this purpose, He will be in the midst of them as their Inter-

cessor, and that whatsoever they *agree* to ask by previous concert, shall be done for them of His Father,—undoubtedly He means to teach us, that there is a peculiar efficacy belonging to social, *distinct* from that of solitary prayer, and *superadded* to it, insomuch that the blessings which are asked by any two or more individuals with common consent, will be more speedily, or more abundantly, or more joyfully, or in some respect or other, more advantageously bestowed upon all than they would have been separately bestowed upon each, in answer to their separate requests; that there is, in short, a higher exercise of Christ's mediatorial office, and a richer effusion of the Father's bounties and loving-kindnesses, connected in the arrangements of His covenant, with the united prayers of several believers, than with the distinct supplications of the very same persons. What encouragement is given here for our taking counsel together, with a view to that high privilege,—for mingling our hearts in the actual use of it! What precious instruction does our Lord here vouchsafe to the heads of households, to the members of families, to men associated in the same pursuits of worldly business, or in the sacred ministrations of the Gospel! And how large a share of the Divine blessing is unquestionably lost, by those even who pray apart with earnestness and effect, for want of their improving the opportunities which they may possess, of calling, each, upon a believing friend, or brother, to say, Amen! But if society in prayer be, in its own nature, well-pleasing to God, it clearly follows, that the farther that society is extended and enlarged, the more will its acceptance and its prevailing power be increased. If the joint petitions of the universal Church be more highly regarded in His sight, as undoubtedly they are, than the requests of two or three individual members; so in proportion will also be those of a whole suppliant nation, or those of any numerous assembly, met as we now are, for the purposes of social worship. Then how valuable

is the opportunity which we even now enjoy ! What advantages may we not derive from the right improvement of it ? How strong is the obligation earnestly to consider, and instantly to put in practice, the method prescribed in the text, for turning it to high account. That we are now gathered together in the name of Christ, your consciences, Believers, testify. That He also is in the midst of us, to meet us thought to thought, and will to will, and heart to heart, let His own gracious word bear witness. That in virtue of such presence here, as will induce and animate His intercessions on high, so that the Father will do for us without fail what things soever we agree to ask, let His precious promise persuade, as it warrants us, assuredly to believe. Then what remains betwixt us and the blessing, but that we should first agree as to the subjects of our request, and then in sincerity present it ? And is this impossible ? Have we not the Scriptures in our own hands which record the promises of God, out of which all holy requests are to be drawn ? And may not the single voice of Christ's unworthiest messenger, so refer to these promises in the hearing of you all, as to direct the thoughts of every believing heart to them at the same instant of time, as the faithful sayings, and worthy of all acceptation, in which you have placed your hope ? May not the lips of one cast these into the shape of prayer ? And may not the hearts of many respond ? Prepare yourselves, I beseech you, Brethren, for this *act* of inward devotion, by considering, whether on the following most momentous subjects of prayer, you are not all agreed. Are you not agreed, that God has promised to all who believe in Jesus the free remission of their sins through His blood ? Are you not agreed, that He has promised His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him ? Are you not agreed, that having appointed a ministry in His Church, He hath promised to be with His servants always, even unto the end of the world ;—not suffering His word to return unto Him void, but

making it prosper in that to which He hath sent it? Are you not agreed, that Christ instituted the ordinance you have this day celebrated, for the edification and comfort of His people through the remembrance of His death, until He come again? Are you not agreed, that by Him kings reign and princes decree justice; that He is the refuge also of the poor, the afflicted, and the fatherless? Do any doubt that His people are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,—that He has established a kingdom in the world which shall extend itself to all nations enduring to the end of time,—that He will call back the righteous from the dust, and assign them an everlasting inheritance? On these greatest, most momentous truths, who but must be assured, that many in this assembly are altogether of the same mind? Who but must feel, that when he now makes any one of them the subject of prayer, the hearts of his brethren are united with him in that request? If, then, you believe, that Christ is present with you here, and that His prayer is offered for you in the sanctuary above, summon up your spirits to call together on the Father in His name,—not questioning, but firmly believing the word that thus speaks to you from heaven:—“Again I say unto you, that if any two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father, which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.”—Amen.

## SERMON II.

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PSALM XXV. 8.

“ Good and upright is the Lord ; therefore will He teach sinners  
in the way.”

IN these words the Psalmist, speaking by the Holy Spirit, first ascribes to God, as attributes of His nature, two perfections, distinct in our conceptions, but united and harmonized in the Divine possession of them,—viz., goodness and uprightness. And next he sets forth the joint effect of these two perfections in their bearing upon the character and destinies of men,—“ Good and upright is the Lord ; therefore will He teach sinners in the way.”

In adverting to the former truth, that God is good and upright, we may remark, that by forming the soul of man in the image of His own spiritual being, God has made us capable of a true, though not complete understanding of His nature, and given us a just, though not adequate sense of His own unbounded excellencies. Those sparks of justice or of love which He has kindled in our bosoms, rendering them not only objects of inward consciousness to us, but motives of action also, and subjects of discourse ; these, when sanctified by the Holy Spirit, prepare us for descrying and feeling the nature of *God's* love, and *God's* justice, as each of them is displayed in His works, or is reflected in His written Word. Our own inward sentiments become to us the rudiments of that most sublime and most precious knowledge, by which the glory of God, even here, shines



by faith into the heart of every man, who is destined hereafter to behold Him face to face.

These inward sentiments, however, are *but* the mere alphabet of the knowledge of God. Erring and low, indeed, would be all the conceptions of Divine goodness and uprightness which we could derive from our own deficient and mixed virtues only. God, therefore, with a wisdom and condescension the most marvellous, has set before our eyes a living image of His own perfections, free from every fault, undebased by any sinful admixture, yet still within the compass of man's native range of thought, and capable of being appreciated by the common tests and notices of man's familiar experience. "He that hath seen me," said the Son of God, "hath seen my Father also." This is the language of one who is likewise the Son of Man,—“He that hath seen me,” saith Jesus of Nazareth, “hath seen (my Father, that is) God.” And what advantages do we not possess for seeing the Lord Jesus, born as He was with all the attributes of human nature,—passing His days, as He did, amid the sharpest trials of human life,—and witnessed of, as He is, by that Omniscient Spirit, who could infallibly select and record all the most instructive and most characteristic particulars of His human thoughts, and words, and actions, while He dwelt on earth? If, with humility, then, and with prayer, we study the life of this HOLY MAN,—and if by the very same process which leads us into the views and feelings of each other, we enter into the mind and heart of Christ Jesus, there we shall read the very character of God, as He has drawn it with His own hand for our special instruction,—there we shall find our souls, as it were, in contact with the very mind and heart of the Almighty,—there we shall be penetrated with a thorough apprehension and sense of His perfections,—and there we shall receive, not indeed that peculiar knowledge of Him which is the lot of angelic spirits, (for man can have only the thoughts of a

man, even about God,) much less that infinitely comprehensive and intense consciousness of His glory, which none but God Himself can enjoy, but still, that very knowledge of Him which was designed for man as being the most suitable of any to his nature and his condition—a knowledge, clear and sure, and exalted—a knowledge, more impressive, salutary, and consoling by far, than all in the world besides that ever bore the name of wisdom.

I. Let us then endeavour to contemplate the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, first as regards his goodness.

Whosoever has felt in his own bosom, or justly apprehended in that of others, the living spirit and genuine emotions of enlarged benevolence, brotherly kindness, filial reverence, paternal tenderness, or any other holy affection, may also discern, through the aid of God's Spirit, the precise manner, though not the degree, in which all such gracious dispositions as come under the name of "goodness," dwelt in the heart of Jesus of Nazareth. Studying the Gospel history with that care and reflection—that deep consideration, which realizes the times, the situations, the incidents, the persons, that called forth the innumerable manifestations of our Saviour's love, such a man will quickly discern, indeed, that it is not dishonoured by the common failings of earthly goodness. He will find that, though free and sovereign, it is never unjust or partial—that, while perfectly discriminating, it is not unduly nice or fastidious, but distinguishes the few without excluding the many—that it is watchfully ready, but nowise rash or precipitate—that it is quite indulgent, but not at all weak—that it is equally far from wasting itself in idle and fruitless feeling, and from resting content with cold and heartless services—that it is unchangeably constant, wheresoever it is to prove effectual, but does not vainly and desperately cling to the wilful or contemptuous self-destructor, however it may have done what was right to be done

for his good, and however it may bewail his fall. Yet the same inquirer will also find, that in utterly avoiding whatsoever partakes of foolishness or of sin, the love of our Saviour is by no means reduced, or in the least approximated to an unintelligible and chilling abstraction, too transcendent and too angelic to exert any sympathetic influence upon the feelings of downfallen humanity; but that, on the contrary, by its untainted sanctity, and its impressive greatness, qualities which increase instead of diminishing its felt reality, it possesses just the more resistless power in seizing, warming, and fashioning our hearts. How could the case be otherwise? If His love was born in heaven, still it was human love. It was love, warm, cordial, and confiding, such as condescended even to the kindest, and most unreserved familiarity, with obscure and guilty men. It was love fervent and zealous, even to the willing endurance of innumerable toils and distresses on their behalf. It was love, tender and compassionate, even to groans and tears of bitter condolence with their sorrows. It was love, devoted and enduring, even to the agony of many deaths, for their salvation's sake.

"Now, He that hath seen me," said this same gracious Man, "hath seen My Father also." If, therefore, we ascribe to the Father's love those very qualities which we see and feel in His—suffering of course excepted—are we in any danger of mistaking or lowering its excellency? Or is there any other means by which its real nature may be more thoroughly brought home to our apprehensions? No, surely. This is the way of presenting it to our souls, which our Maker has Himself devised as the truest, the most instructive, and the most affecting possible. We cannot, therefore, fail to acquire just sentiments as to the Divine goodness, otherwise than by erring or coming short in our ideas of the love of Christ. Whereas, if we enter into the benevolent feelings of His MAN'S HEART, the heart also of the Godhead is before us. This one only thing more is to be

remembered, that the human soul of Jesus, while great and energetic in all its movements beyond the utmost reach of other men's conceptions, was, nevertheless, as a creature, limited; whereas His own Divinity, and that of His Father, is infinite; and that as the being of God is, so also is His love, large as to its views, strong as to its movements, effectual as to its operations, beyond measure and without end. And when together with all this greatness, His loving kindnesses and tender mercies are seen as possessing the same encouraging, and attractive, and soul-subduing characters, with the sympathies and compassions of the man Christ Jesus, and that in a boundless degree; what remains, but that we yield ourselves His willing captives, and with the prophet's delight and admiration exclaim, "How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!" Or with the Psalmist's, "How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings!"

We have been directing our eyes to the glory of God's goodness as seen in the person of Christ, where it is best displayed. The text led to this in the first place. But similar advantages are afforded us for truly understanding, secondly,—

II. The Divine uprightness:—Good and upright is the Lord. This other attribute of God,—His righteousness, justice, equity,—when viewed through the medium of Christ's character, will be found as awful as His goodness is amiable. Every man whose own thoughts have been exercised in distinguishing betwixt right and wrong, and who has felt in his own bosom the healthful love of whatsoever things are true and just, and honest, and of good report, will find these same excellencies, if he make the right inquiry after them, displayed with a glorious simplicity and majesty in the person of our Lord. Not in the outward manifestations of words and deeds alone, but in the whole frame and disposition of His soul, and that not merely on

some great occasions, but always without ceasing, he will find that pattern and paragon of all righteousness, rendering what was fit and equitable unto all,—to God,—to Cæsar,—to the Scribe and Pharisee that sat in Moses' seat,—to the multitude,—to the prosperous and the afflicted,—to friends and enemies,—to all others in short, and to Himself. Here is found no proud or slothful negligence omitting to contemplate the whole of any case, or try the real strength of any claim. Here is seen no hard and perverse prejudice corrupting the judgment, no base or selfish passion casting the balance of decision against conscience, no feverish infirmity even, exaggerating or diminishing in any respect beyond due bounds the precise awards of justice. Every shadow, every thought of such evils is infinitely removed from the whole course and tenor of a life that was guided throughout by the clearest discernment, and animated by the strongest love of all that was right and equal. Behold, then, the very image of the Father's justice, who not only with an omniscient wisdom, but with an infinite love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, "judgeth all things without respect of persons," assumes to Himself what is meet and righteous,—nothing more,—and gives to every creature according to his character and his work. But since as offenders against God, it concerns us especially to know the aspect of His uprightness towards the transgressors of His law, let us not forget to seek the instruction which may be gathered in this particular from the human feelings of that Man whom He hath appointed Judge of the living and the dead. Our Lord was meek, patient, long-suffering above all men,—was He then a stranger to the sterner sentiments with which just men are often moved against the perverse, the obdurate, the abandoned workers of iniquity? No; He was capable of a righteous anger; He could feel a holy resentment; His spirit could burn with a godlike indignation. More than once, for instance, it is recorded, that he looked round upon the shameless traducers of

His healing miracles with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts. A similar feeling, again, is observable in His conduct to Judas. What solemn ardour of justice, tempered with pity, breathes in the last of His warnings to the wicked, the miserable traitor ! “ But woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed ! good were it for that man if he had never been born.” When this warning, with the exposure of his design which followed it, instead of deterring the son of perdition, incited him rather to the crime—with what awful decision did his Master consign him to the wickedness which he had chosen—and abandon him to the commission of a deed which ere another sun should go down, was to lodge him, by his own act, in the mansions of everlasting despair. It is not in the mere words which Jesus spoke, that this feeling is to be discovered ; these were so simple and so calm, that none but Judas himself saw any thing unusual in them, but it is in the emphatic meaning, as explained by all that ensued—a meaning too big with terror in all its bearings to be uttered by him who felt it thoroughly without the deepest emotion,—“ That thou doest,” He said to the man that was about to betray the Lord of Glory into the hands of sinners, “ That thou doest, do quickly !” But why multiply examples ? A single one might have sufficed,—I mean that closing effort of His ministry in the Temple, by which the influence of threats and denunciations was brought to bear upon those whom gentleness and wisdom had failed to reclaim,—that address, the burden of which is, “ Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! Woe unto you, ye blind guides, ye fools and blind ! ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell !” Surely, if there is in man a spirit that kindles into holy indignation at the sight of hardened and incurable iniquity in its work of far-spreading destruction ; and if it is this that sharpens the tongue with righteous censure, and arms it with fervent denunciations of a



coming retribution, then must that spirit have moved with a terrible earnestness in our Saviour's heart, when in the discourse alluded to, and in the words just cited, He pronounced against these worst of deceivers and murderers, a sentence of condemnation, and punishment more appalling by far, than any that sounded before in the ears of living men, or than ever can again be equalled on earth for majesty and fear, until that same voice shall, at the last, and once for all proclaim,—“ Depart from Me, ye cursed !”

Now, from all that we can see of human equity in our Lord, it is warrantable for us—nay, it is our bounden duty and our privilege—to gather distinct, and true, and impressive ideas of the sovereign JUSTICE of the Most High God. Thus it is given us to feel, that however great may be the length, and breadth, and height, and depth of that justice beyond the grasp of our conceptions, it is no slumbering or *inefficient* property of the Divine essence, but a living energy, for ever watchful and operative, that goes forth through all the works and ways of God, to weigh every existing thing in the balances of unerring truth, and to determine especially the present and everlasting state of every responsible immortal agent, according to righteousness, and by an irreversible decree, whether it be for weal or for woe. Judging by that unquenchable strength and ardour of righteousness which sustained the earthly labours of Christ, in giving glory to His God and salvation to His people; what shall we think of the Divine equity, as it travels in the strength of sovereign will and wonder-working omnipotence, to confer in heaven those glorious rewards upon His saints, which His own previous bounties had enabled them to win, and prepared them to enjoy? Or drawing knowledge from the earthly displeasure of Immanuel against the wicked, when amid His meekness He was moved to wrath—when amid His pity He finally cut off the unfaithful—and when in the temple He, with one breath, denounced woe

against the rebellious, and with the next cried, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children!"—what shall we think of God's immense and incomprehensible justice, when calmer and clearer than the light, but more resistless than the heavens in their speed, it issues forth to the doom and punishment of the impenitent—infinately removed indeed from all excessive and unnecessary rigours, but infinitely incapable, too, of all weak connivances, all unrighteous lenities—and if there be truth in God's own solemn announcement, armed with no lighter terrors than pertain to the vengeance of eternal fire? Surely it is not without trembling awe that any child of a fallen race, destined soon himself to stand at that dread tribunal, should dare to think, or speak, or hear, of these things. "Lord, Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance. Who knoweth the power of Thine anger? According to Thy fear, so is Thy wrath! So teach us to number our days, as to apply our hearts unto wisdom!"

Such, then, according to the Scriptures, is the goodness, and such the uprightness of the Lord. If these attributes are admirable in their distinct and separate glories, how much more in their union?

III. In their union, therefore, thirdly—in their combined and consistent working, let us now consider them. While we speculate only upon their abstract nature, they may appear in some points so unlike—nay, so opposite even to one another—that a complete harmony in their interests and operations may seem impossible. Not so when we come to view their actual effects in the creation of God, and in the administration of His great moral family. There those conjunctures which we should beforehand have denominated the *collisions* of God's justice with His goodness, instead of producing any sacrifice of the prerogatives of either, serve only to display more illustriously the in-

finite grandeur and invincible efficiency of both. Innumerable evidences of this fact appear in all the dispensations of heaven from the beginning. But since we have no room to expatiate, let us observe it only where it is indeed above all conspicuous, in the obedience unto death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was undoubtedly an adorable display of the goodness of God, that He should create at all such glorious beings as men and angels were in their holy state, and confer upon them on earth and in heaven the sovereignty of worlds. But when, upon the fall of Adam, favour was not utterly withdrawn from his race, but the rebellious and the unthankful, the contemptuous despisers and perverse abusers of God's unmerited bounties, continued still the objects of His unwearied compassions, then, goodness, it is evident, appeared under quite a new aspect, and brought forth treasures of beneficence before unheard of and unknown. But here the claims of Sovereign justice seemed to interpose. Shall the wicked be as the righteous?—the righteous as the wicked? That be far from God! Must goodness then abandon her hope, and leave the lost to perish utterly? No; for there is found a remedy. A being of unspotted holiness and uncreated majesty,—God and the Son of God, will assume the nature of the fallen, and bear the burden of their sin, that, through His bitter sufferings and deep experience of Almighty wrath, as well as through His fulfilment of all righteousness, He may atone for the offences of the guilty, and make it just, wise, honourable in God for ever to lavish forth both upon the Redeemer Himself, and upon all that put their trust in Him, the blessings of unlimited Almighty love. Here, surely, is *goodness* in a much more extraordinary and marvellous light than ever,—displaying resources inconceivable, and all but incredible, except in their actual and overwhelming exhibition. Here is goodness willingly putting off, as it were, for a time, its own tendencies, and suspending and almost inverting its usual opera-

tion ; and toward the person, not of any mere creature, but of God-man, the possessor of all human and divine excellence, and the object of His Father's ineffable delight ; even in regard to such a person consenting to put wrath for love, ignominy for honour, anguish and horror for celestial joy, death and the grave for a throne of immortality,—doing all this, in order, through this medium, to reach the miseries of the rebellious, and bless them with the whole fulness of its own native unfettered and uncontrollable beneficence. Here, indeed, is goodness marching in triumph to her ends over the most formidable obstacles. But is it by the overthrow of justice ? Is it by the downfall of uprightness ? Is it even with the least injury to her cause ? the least insult or disrespect to her dignity or praise ? It is, on the contrary, with such fresh disclosure of her brightness, such awful enhancement of her fear, such high exaltation, too, and firm establishment of her throne, as no imaginable course but this could have effected. For if we speak of her terrors, howsoever these may be revealed, in smiting this present world, through every age, with labour, and plagues, and death ; or in overwhelming the outcasts of the spiritual world, be they men or angels, with tribulation and anguish incomprehensible to mortals ; yet surely there was made a far more extraordinary and super-eminent display,—a far more enlightening, and especially more persuasive and prevailing manifestation of these terrors, when Justice, finding Him who was the brightness of the Father's glory now clothed in the likeness of sinful flesh, though without sin, and presenting Himself as the Substitute and Surety of sinners,—“ *Wounded* Him for our transgressions, and *bruised* Him for our iniquities ;”—inflicting upon the Holy One and the Just not a mere semblance or slight degree of penal severity, but such true and terrible extremities of bodily distress and mental agony, as, in the person of Immanuel, the first-born of every creature, might not only appear to all created intelligences, but

*be* in the sight of God Himself a real and an adequate sacrifice for the guilt of countless myriads of men. Or if, again, we contemplate justice on the lovely and attractive side of her function, the result will be the same. Excellent, undoubtedly, was her work in awarding to the holy angels and to man, in his state of innocence, the gracious fruits of their obedience; but is she not advanced to a more admirable and illustrious work by far when adjudging the eternal rewards of an infinite merit to Him who once received at her hands the cup of trembling, and when crowning those very men, his followers, with glory, honour, and immortality for His sake, who were once the subjects of her curse, and heirs by nature of her consuming vengeance? . . . It is thus that, in the cross of Christ, we now see justice exalted as we saw goodness before. The glory of each of these attributes is heightened exceedingly by its relation to the others; and the harmony of both is beyond measure illustrated in those very circumstances, where all but uncreated wisdom would have anticipated its utter failure. Let the testimony of the Psalmist, then, be echoed with thankfulness, that "Good and upright is the Lord," and let His song be sung with triumph by every one who understands its import,—“Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before Thy face.”

Having thus far endeavoured to contemplate, first the goodness, then the uprightness of God, and, last of all, the perfect consent and harmony of these attributes between themselves in the salvation of sinners—topics which are all contained in the former clause of our text—let us next proceed, not to illustrate, (for time would fail us,) but simply to state, and very briefly to apply, what the second clause asserts, namely, that the natural effect and joint operation of these two perfections upon the present state of man, is “to teach sinners in the way.”—*What* way, then, will infinite goodness point at? The way, surely, of eter-

nal happiness ! And what way will infinite justice approve of ? The way of sincere and faultless righteousness. But is there a way of holiness for the corrupt to walk in ? a path of living rectitude that can possibly be travelled by the dead—the dead in trespasses and sins ? Or does there exist a hope of true happiness—a door—an avenue of everlasting peace for the self-condemned, the condemned of Heaven, the heirs, by a righteous and irreversible sentence, of outer darkness and of despairing groans ? Is there such a way for sinners ? Yes ; that very way which the united love and justice of our Maker, having first opened, will now teach every man who despises not His counsel to pursue. It is the way of faith—faith in that glorious Victim which Goodness provided in compassion for our miseries—which Justice slew in wrath against our sins—and which, both united, (not as if they had ever been separated,) have raised from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of Power, a Prince and a Saviour, to give unto His Israel both repentance and the remission of their sins. Conjoined with Him, by the will of God, into one mystical Person, through that simple acquiescence in His truth, which freely accepts what He freely bestows, we become entire partakers of His righteousness and His life, even as He once did of our guiltiness and our death—so that, for His sake, the love of God will, in *righteousness*, acquit us for ever of all our iniquities—and the righteousness of God will, in *love*, bestow upon us here the sanctifying graces of the Holy Spirit, to renew us in His own image ; and hereafter, when we are thus made meet for it, a portion in His heavenly kingdom :—or rather His love and His righteousness, going hand in hand, will work all these things together in all that believe.—It is not, however, without a visible instrumentality that these great ends are accomplished. By His word and ordinances,—by His providence,—by the diligent application and gracious labours of His people themselves, performed with prayer—by the kindness of



friends and fellow-servants, their good example, their liberalities, their intercessions—by these, and a thousand secret means besides, does God “teach sinners in the way.”—Now, have not all these means been brought to bear on us, my brethren? Are we not all invited—drawn, as it were, by the constraining hand of God into that way which alone is *good* and *holy*? Have we entered it? Is the trust of our hearts in Christ? Is His example our pattern—His word our guide? If not, O, hasten! The work is great;—the peril is imminent—the time is short.—But if we have entered by this door, and are walking in this way, and have put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, and garments of righteousness; yet, let us abound more and more in love and in good works.—Have the goodness and uprightness of the Lord led us sinners, by the Gospel way, into a resemblance and enjoyment of themselves? Then, O let us not forget, as, indeed, we trust you do not forget, that it well becomes our goodness and our uprightness—nay, that if genuine, it is of their very nature and essence, in the humble plan of instrumentality which belongs to them, to labour earnestly for the benefit of our fellow-sinners, that they too may be led, in this blessed way, to all the holiness and all the comfort of the Christian life. If God has deposited in our hands, and expressly for their benefit, means which, rightly employed, He hath promised to make effectual both for the perfecting of the saints and the conversion of unbelievers, how can it consist with goodness that we neglect the use of these means? How can it consist with uprightness that we reserve them selfishly for our own advantage? What can be more opposite to both these perfections as united in God, and as reflected in the character of God’s people, than the apathy with which we too often regard the wickedness and miseries of our unconverted fellow-men, the discomfort and the unfruitfulness of our languid, or tempted, or afflicted fellow-Christians? Let love, let duty, let both together stir us up to

seek their good continually,—so shall we ourselves the more truly put on Christ. So shall we the more fully perform our vows. So shall we the more thoroughly be taught in the way, and learn the more deeply at last from the joys of a heavenly experience, how much is meant by that saying, that “Good and upright is the Lord.”—Amen.

## SERMON III.

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I Cor. xi. 31, 32.

“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

“HE that believeth in the Son of God,” said our Lord to Nicodemus, “is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the only-begotten Son of God.” From this declaration of Christ, it is plain, that the world, of which our text bears witness that it is condemned, consists of all the unbelieving, whilst those of whom it speaks as delivered from condemnation, are just all true believers. Does God, then, pass over the sins of His believing people without observation? No, says St. Paul, speaking in their name, “We are judged.” Is this judgment a bare estimate and record of their delinquencies, unattended with any sharp or painful consequences? No:—“When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord.” But, does either the judgment or the chastening proceed in the spirit of that penal rigour under which the unbelieving utterly perish? No:—“When we are judged we are chastened, that we may *not* be condemned with the world.” And is there any way in which the Christian may escape the severities of a correction, dreadful when it comes from the hand of the Lord, no less than salutary? There is a way, could any be found to use it fully,—“If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”

These truths were set before the Corinthians for their better instruction in the right participation of our Lord's Supper. It was indeed at a period when that Church was remarkable for gross abuses of that holy ordinance. Heavy judgments, on that account, were in actual execution amongst them. Many were weak and sickly, many were dead; and it was for the warning, the improvement, and the comfort of the living, that the Apostle wrote to them as we have seen. We, too, my brethren, are conversant at this time with holy duties. We, too, have many sins; nor are we altogether strangers to correction, either in experience or in prospect. Improvement, at least, in all holiness, in the duty of communicating, is what we should all most earnestly desire; and, therefore, well it becomes us now to consider with devout attention, words, in the design of the Omniscient Spirit, addressed for that end as much to us as to the disciples at Corinth.

I. First, then, Believers,—for to such alone the Apostle addresses himself,—when we commit sin, we are judged. So says the Scripture elsewhere as well as here:—"God shall judge His people."—"Judgment shall *begin* with the household of God." Yes! however slightly our thoughts may realize it, the Lord Himself is ever near, to mark with a peculiar vigilance, and to resist with a special jealousy, the sins of those whom the Father hath given Him out of the world to be peculiarly His own inheritance and His praise. Though He could wink at the offences of another, which on earth may happen, because He seeth that his day is coming, (Ps. xxxvii.); yet, *their* ungodliness, unrighteousness, impurity, whether seen in action or in heart, cannot fail to arrest His notice, and awaken His great displeasure. More particularly must He abhor, as the origin and root of every other evil, the secret iniquities of the heart against Himself, in whatever measure they may exist—the levity that forgets Him—the worldliness that excludes Him—the un-

belief that distrusts Him—the hardness that withstands Him—the ingratitude, perverseness, and presumption, which refuse to love and to obey Him. These, conjoined with what indeed is their natural progeny,—the pride, selfishness, and coldness which indispose a man, whether to compassionate the afflictions of a brother,—or whether to forgive his injuries,—or whether to promote his honour and welfare in earthly, but especially in spiritual things,—all this deep-seated wickedness and depravity of the heart, its native temper, so far as it is not yet renovated, is watched by Him in all its movements,—traced by Him into all its outward effects, which embrace, in fact, the whole catalogue of human transgressions, and is in all of them, as well as in its own intrinsic nature, the object of His irreconcilable aversion and hostility. That so much evil should be harboured by any creature of His power, how lost and hopeless soever, cannot but displease Him. But that it should exist, to so sad an extent, in those whom He hath chosen for Himself,—whom He has instructed in His will, and made acquainted with His love,—whom He hath cleansed and purified with His blood, revived and comforted by His Spirit,—in whom He has actually broken the dominion of sin, as well as removed the dread of its punishment, and implanted a living principle of holiness, as well as kindled the hope of an eternal reward; that in them such a vile thing should exist, in spite of all the admonitions of His word, and rebukes of His providence; this cannot but be to His pure and righteous spirit, beyond expression, grievous, offensive, and abominable. The enmity of those who are reaping in darkness the fruit of their impenitence is a hateful thing; still more is the rebellion of men with whom He yet has patience, prolonging their day of grace, although they know Him not. But the thankless unfruitfulness, and backsliding disobedience, of those whom He has actually rescued from death, who dwell in His house, and find shelter in His bosom,—O here is the exceeding sinful-

ness of sin!—And He will judge it. The evil and the remedy are alike plain to His view. To vindicate the honour of His Godhead, in such a case, and to correct the folly of so many weak and wilful souls, He knows what is needful, and He is resolved it shall be done.

II. For so the Apostle testifies in the second place: “When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord.” Pain, and grief, and trouble are the proper correctives of this disorder. No other means in nature will so rightly answer the purpose. Has the wisdom of man found out any different method of subduing perverse disobedience in his own offspring? It has found none. Does the Word of God acquaint us with any other method? It does not. When He, the Father of Mercies, Himself has recourse to severity, is it because He takes pleasure in the tears and groans of His children? Far, far from it. Chastisement is His strange work; and even while His hand wields the needful scourge, His lips are uttering the language of the tenderest remonstrance—“Why should ye be stricken any more?” That course, therefore, He takes, because His people being as they are, it is the only effectual, and so the indispensable one; and since there is not one of His redeemed children ever found willing to renounce his sins until he has tasted their bitterness, therefore there is not so much as one of them that shall escape correction; but it is become the universal rule that “whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth *every* son whom He receiveth.”

Nor let us think, my Brethren, because God deals forth His inflictions for edification, not destruction, that we may therefore await them with slight apprehensions, and not with fear and trembling. Ah! this is not the lesson taught us by actual experience of their power. It is true, when lesser faults only are to be conquered, milder reproofs, being sufficient, will alone be resorted to. But when the sin is deep, and calls for vigorous



remedies—when it is peculiarly dangerous, and must at any cost be exterminated—then the Lord will make bare His mighty arm to administer strong correction, sharp rebuke, terrific calamity, heart-rending tribulation. There have, no doubt, been men upon whom all this, and more, has been employed without effect—who rather than return to the Lord, have chosen stubbornly to endure His displeasure, and even to “lie down in sorrow.” But these were rebels, not His children. If I am indeed His own,—knowing all the avenues to my heart, He will find out the side on which it is most exposed and vulnerable—*there*, when need is, He will strike, and compel it to weep blood until it is purified. If loss of health, wealth, or honour be the evil that would most affect it—if it be the desertion or the death of kindred friends or brethren—if it even be that many objects of my love live in sin or die without hope—or if nothing is enough to make me feel, except the grave yawn at my own feet, and I behold, with the eyes of a terrified and distracted conscience, the jaws of hell itself wide open to devour my own soul—then shall these very judgments, any or all of them, if nothing less will do, be executed upon me to the uttermost. “The thing which I greatly feared shall come upon me; and that which I was afraid of shall come unto me. The Lord shall hunt me as a fierce lion; and again He will show Himself marvellous upon me,” until sloth, until pride, until my earthly-mindedness, my uncharitableness, until the sin, whatever it be, for which the Lord contends with me, be set before my eyes in all its horror, and all its baseness; and I exclaim at last, like the Patriarch, looking up with filial fear to my Corrector, “Lord, I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

III. And thus, thirdly, it is brought to pass that though the Lord judge, though He chasten His people, yet they shall not

be “condemned with the world.” This is the very use and effect of their chastisements, that while the unbelieving are doomed to endless punishment, **THEY** shall escape. Not that their present sufferings are in any shape or measure an atonement for their offences:—that atonement is found alone in the sufferings of Christ. Not that the holiness of character which, by the power of the Holy Ghost, chastisement produces, is in any sense the ground of their reconciliation with God; it is the *fact* of that reconciliation, and the cause is found alone in the merits of Christ’s righteousness. Not even that the afflictions of the just, occasioned by sin, are the principal manifestation of God’s unchanging enmity against sin; for that enmity also, beyond all comparison, is most fully exhibited in the cross of Christ. Yet, certainly, when we see that, as in heaven, where there is no sin, **NEITHER** is there any sorrow, and as in hell, where all is sin, all is sorrow too; even so on earth, where there is a great deal of sin, there is also a great deal of sorrow,—this completes the demonstration, that in the righteous judgment of God, and doubtless also in the nature of things, wickedness in all worlds is inseparably attended with woe; and that, go where we will, holiness is alone our preparation for blessedness.

As, without this vindication of His holy name in the chastisement of His people, answered for although they have been by the death of Christ,—as, without this, it is manifestly not a part of the Divine economy that any sinner should enter into rest; so, notwithstanding the riches of His aid in word and ordinance, in providential excitements and encouragements, and, above all, in spiritual influences and graces (for by the Holy Ghost alone it is that means of any kind are made effectual);—notwithstanding all these, it is not without the use of chastisements that any are ever in the necessary degree “made partakers of His holiness.” A sanctity and purity of no mean strain is requisite to fit a man for standing worthily at the right hand of the Holy One

and the Just in the great day. To make the high attainment, chastisement assists us not only in the way, without the plain mention of which, under a former head, the very nature of God's fatherly correction could not be set forth, namely, the way of showing us our sin, and prostrating us before our Judge in penitence and confession, but it also assists us in the way of calling forth many excellent Christian graces which otherwise would be neglected, even were there room for them,—courage, for instance, long-suffering, and patience. Nay, the very essentials of Christian character, without possessing which a man could be no disciple at all, can never be wrought up to their due perfection without the help of what our weakness and backwardness at least will always regard as trials. In absence of all conflicts, temptations, and troubles which every believer feels, when they arrive, to be, without exception, chastenings, how could faith, that firmly holds the promises of God for truth, in spite of all discouragements? or how could love, that counts the loss of all things as nothing while it possesses Him? or how could hope, that deems all present affliction not worthy to be named for the bright anticipation of coming glory?—how, without trial, could these graces, the very substance, and strength, and ornament of the Christian character, be heightened to their noblest temper, and employed in their best and most illustrious uses? No. Labours, sacrifices, and sorrows, varied in their nature, prolonged in their succession; never dealt out in such measure as to overwhelm the weakest, yet capable of exercising to their uttermost pitch the wisest, and mightiest, and most endearing of the sons of God; THESE have ever been the means, in the hands of God's omnipotent Spirit, which produced all the examples of renowned worth that shed a lustre upon the annals of primitive time. Trials raised Abraham to the majestic composure of an immoveable reliance upon God. Trials crowned Moses with the honours of an inexhaustible faithfulness, energy,

and perseverance. Trials encompassed the old age of David with so many delightful fruits of royal prudence and heroic valour. By trials encountered without ceasing for many years together, Paul had his spirit fired with that inextinguishable zeal and that lively foresight of celestial blessedness which, being perfected in him by worldly troubles, turned at last those troubles themselves into a source of enjoyment; so that he "took pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake;" nay, "gloried in those very tribulations" which might make him seem, in eyes that saw not his hope, to be of all men most miserable. Such is the spirit of those exalted attainments, conferred by the Holy Ghost through suffering, by means of which it comes to pass that the children of God, in that day when every man shall receive according to his deeds, "shall not be condemned with the world." What then? If destitute, like others, of this personal righteousness, must they, like others, be on that day condemned? Yes, certainly, IF destitute of this personal righteousness: for it is a rule which admits of absolutely no exception, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But then, the hour which united them by faith to Christ Jesus wrought that change of state in them which made it impossible that the day of decision should so find them naked, bondmen of iniquity, and alienated from the life of God. That hour bound up their destinies with those of their Redeemer, making His death their death, His life their life, pledging His name, His blood, His crown for their perfection and their safety. Then He undertook for them, then He forgave their sins, then He changed their hearts, then He conferred His almighty Spirit upon them, to make it sure that every individual of their multitude, how far soever from the stature of a Paul or a Moses, yea, were he the feeblest child in the household of the faithful, shall be found, in his measure, an upright and a godly man.

Then He engaged the inexhaustible resources of that power by which He is head over all things for the Church, to begin, and to carry on, and to complete their growth in knowledge, in righteousness, and in true holiness. Then, in particular (for this is the point with which we are now specially concerned), he ensured their interest in the Father's promise made to himself on their behalf—"If his children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, my loving-kindness I will not take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail."—So that, let it be through much tribulation, yet his children shall enter into the kingdom of God. Himself administering, throughout, the chastisement, along with the grace of the promise, He will take effectual care that, in the end, when the secrets of all hearts are made manifest, they shall be found, as individuals, holy, unblameable, and unreprouable; and, in their union and aggregate, "a glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Consummate shall be the praise of His faithfulness and His grace, when they shall all appear—as appear they will—in every view too visibly the children of God without rebuke, to make it either just or possible for them to be condemned with the world.

IV. But is it really impracticable to elevate believing men to this needful height of excellence without the use of painful corrections. What hinders an Almighty Saviour from purifying His people thoroughly by gentler methods than these? Nothing whatever, (for this is the last particular of our subject, and embraces the application of the whole)—nothing hinders Him but the negligence and remissness of His people themselves. He would gladly abstain from this distressing exercise of His function, would they but deal faithfully with their own souls: "If we would judge ourselves," says His inspired servant, "we

should not be judged." Does he mean, then, that the stripes which HE would in this case withhold, WE should ourselves inflict? So has superstition often decided it and acted on the decision, but without the slightest countenance from this text. For *it* makes a manifest distinction betwixt the "judgment" and the "chastisement." It speaks of the chastisement, not as being the same thing with the judgment, but as being another thing that follows upon it. When we are judged, then, we are chastened, in consequence;—and it assigns to us, as matter of duty, not the chastisement, but the judgment only, reserving the other for the Lord. For that very reason, however, we ought the more earnestly to consider what the judgment implies;—that affects so materially the treatment we are to experience at His hands; if we use it,—gentleness; if we neglect it,—the scourge.

1. And, surely, it can require of us nothing less, in the first place, than a diligent inspection of our heart and mind, our habits and pursuits, our thoughts, and words, and deeds, that we may observe and know what they really are. It can require nothing less than a careful comparison of these with the perfect standard of holiness presented in the precepts and examples of the Sacred Volume, together with a deliberate and discriminating judgment both as to the attainments which, with our advantages, we ought to have made, but have not; and as to the trespasses which we were fully warned to avoid, but have heedlessly or wilfully committed. Unless at the very threshold of our procedure something like this be done, and done earnestly, how can the estimate we form of ourselves at all coincide with that of the Sovereign Judge, who, in this case, has delegated to us His office, not that His own righteous sentence should be perverted, but that we might become the willing instruments of passing that sentence upon ourselves?

2. To know our sins and deficiencies, however, although we



saw them in even all their guilt and loathsomeness, is but the first step in the process of judgment. We need to consider, farther, what recompense they have justly merited at the hand of God, in order that we may, in contemplation, take the whole weight and power of that recompense home to our very soul and conscience. Have we dealt unfaithfully with the Divine covenant to an extent that might deserve exclusion from it? (For it is not God's secret purpose, or counsel, but our desert, that is in question here.) Have we so grossly abused the forgiving mercy of Christ, that He might justly refuse to forgive us any more? Have we so often resisted—so deeply grieved—the Holy Spirit of God, that He might even be glorified in forsaking us for ever? Have we treated with such levity and disregard the claims of faith and the blessings of a good conscience, that the doom might be not only righteous but praiseworthy, which should leave us to make shipwreck of both? Or assuming that the Divine forbearance should refrain from the execution of such fatal rigours, however merited, and should confine its inflictions (as indeed it ever does with the redeemed,) within the limits of a salutary chastisement;—yet what painful kinds of humiliation, what heavy loads of sorrow, what a lengthened series of vexations and distresses, might the heart-searching God see it necessary to heap upon us, in order to mortify completely affections so depraved as ours, and to arouse such torpid hearts to something near a becoming ardour of zeal for the Divine glory, and of diligence in making our own calling and election sure? Is He not skilful to adapt the cure to the malady? Is He not strong to wring per force from our breasts their darling corruptions? Was it not He who requited the guile of Jacob against his Father, by the still more cruel falsehood and treachery of his own children? Did he not make Samson the victim of his own misguided strength? And when David, a righteous man in the main, became for once the murderous violator of domestic

right and honour, did not God rebuke him to his face, by making the palaces of Jerusalem from that hour, and continually for many generations, the scenes of domestic jealousy, pollution, and slaughter? Should He deal with us upon the same principle, which of all our enjoyments would be safe or permanent? Would our wealth, our influence, our good name? Would kindred, family, friends? Would knowledge, reason, speech? Would the peace and prosperity of our land? Would the house and ordinances of our God? Which, alas! of all these, and of ten thousand blessings more, have we not perverted or misimproved? And which of them, consequently, might not, with perfect suitableness, be not only made incapable of affording us the least gratification, but converted into an engine of severe though salutary castigation, on which to crucify unto the death our rebellious lusts? All this, then, we must know—and not only know but deeply feel—and not only feel but confess with unfeigned contrition and fear before God, or we have not yet known what it is, in the real spirit of the text, “To judge ourselves.”

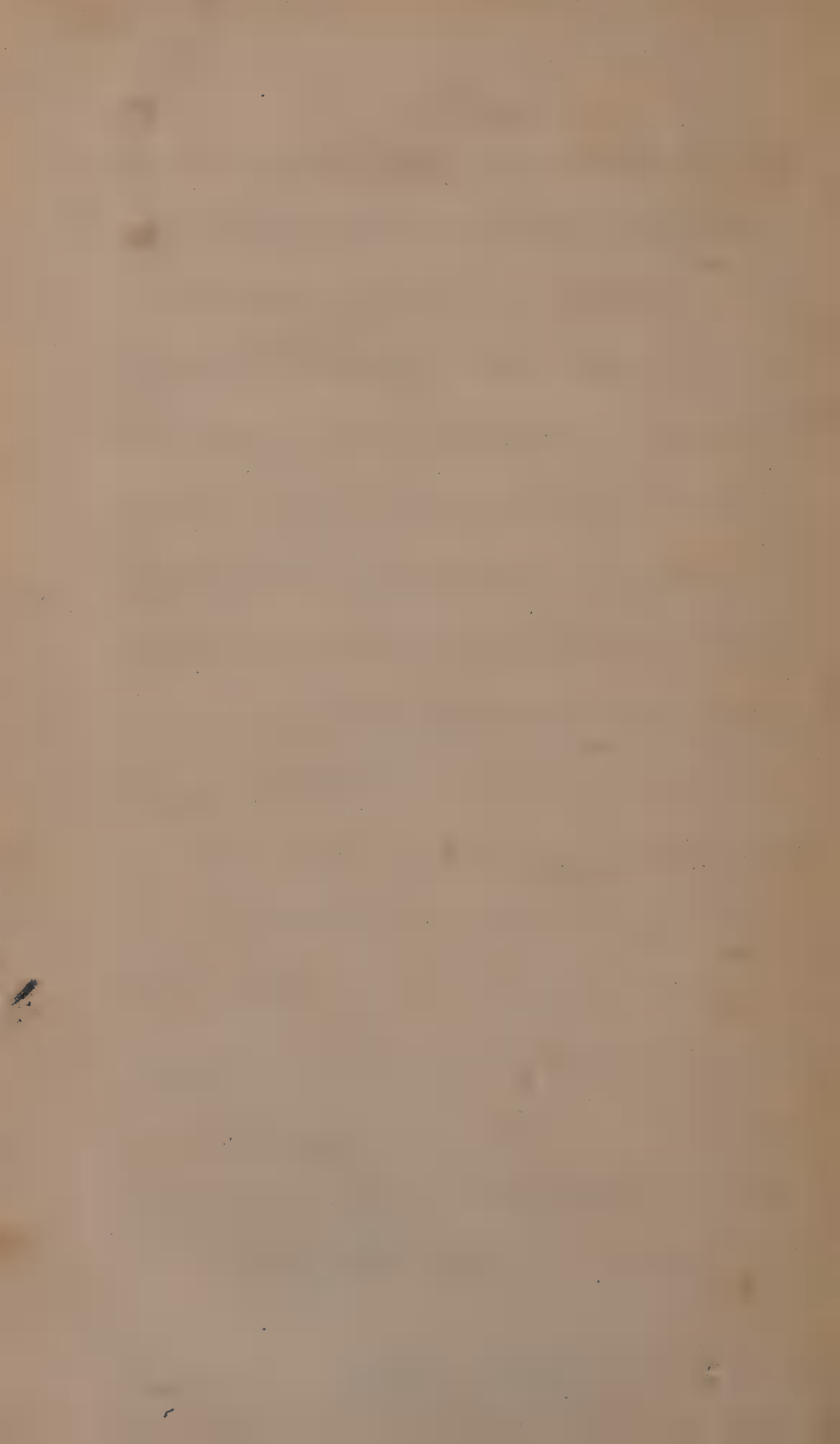
3. At last, however, when all this is done, we have but begun our work, not finished it. To comprehend its true amount, it is necessary to keep the end in view. What is the design of all God’s corrections? To cleanse His people thoroughly and permanently from their sins. And will He rest satisfied with any kind of self-judgment on our part, as an equivalent for His corrections, which does not ensure the one main purpose of them? Undoubtedly He cannot; nay, woe should be to us if He did. It is not enough, then, that we see our sin, however clearly; or be humbled for it, how truly—how deeply soever. It is not enough that we apprehend, however fully and solemnly, the judgments by which it might become the justice and wisdom of the Lord to chastise our disobedience. We must be made thoroughly sensible, moreover, that the Almighty

Sanctifier of our souls, before whose eyes our guiltiness is all open, and who disposes at pleasure of all our destiny, is one who cannot be mocked—who will not allow that the main principles of His government be subverted—who will not suffer that the main application of His measures be evaded—who will not endure that the main object of His counsels and dispensations fall to the ground. We must set Him before our eyes as One who holds the unalterable determination, at every expense and through whatever fiery process of refinement, to restore the character of His people to a perfect conformity with His own; and if they neglect the more lenient means of self-improvement which He mercifully points out for their adoption—One who will certainly—who will speedily—who will fearfully cause their inmost souls to know the power of His displeasure, as the only expedient left, in the way of necessary means, for snatching them from ruin. Of this alarming, but wholesome truth, we must so receive the vivid conviction, and so feel the resistless urgency, as to be made, in very earnest, without reserve, and without delay, to renounce, to expel, and resolutely to shut out every sin which previous investigation had discovered in our hearts, more especially those that had been principally cherished there. The promise to all Christians that are Christians indeed is explicit, “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace.” To mortify our liveliest affections, to treat the most inward delights of our bosom, if they be sinful, as our deadliest enemies, is, of necessity, a painful, but by the might of God’s Omnipotent Spirit it shall be a prosperous labour. Until, therefore, we are actually engaged with all our powers of thinking, willing, and working in this most necessary and most salutary exercise—until we are found in the very act of plucking out the offending right eye and cutting off the offending right hand—until, so doing, we have set ourselves fervently to implore the renovating grace of

the Holy Ghost, through the merits and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ—and betaken ourselves with all earnestness to those appointed *means* of grace by which the heart is inclined to the love of God as well as deepened in His fear,—and strengthened not only to abhor transgression but delight in the paths of holiness; until we have done all this in such a spirit of wakeful intelligence, of strong determination, and of hardy endurance, as betokens sincerity, and promises perseverance, the evidence is utterly wanting that we have ever begun so to judge ourselves as not to be judged. But once entered in earnest upon this better course, we may rest assured, upon the testimony of innumerable Scriptures, as well as of the text, that though chastisement must still be our lot, because our self-judgment will still be imperfect, yet, just in proportion to our faithfulness in the work, will God withhold the most piercing, severe, and awful judgments, which must otherwise befall us,—grant numberless indulgencies and gratifications which otherwise we could not be entrusted with—and conduct us, with equal speed and safety, but by a far more smooth and pleasant path, to that very place of honour and blessedness, in the mansions of His glory, which the counsel of His love had prepared for us before the foundation of the world. Amen.

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